

## Morocco to send medicine to Iraq

RABAT (AFP) — A plane loaded with 10 tonnes of medicine has received permission to fly to Iraq on Monday, the trade union sponsoring the shipment announced Saturday. The CDT Labour Confederation said it had been given the necessary authorisations after more than two weeks of contacts with the United Nations and Moroccan officials. The shipment was intended to demonstrate the Moroccan people's solidarity with their "brothers in Iraq," the CDT said in a statement. The plane is scheduled to leave Casablanca Airport on Monday at 2300 GMT, the statement said. Special permission is required for the flight because of U.N. sanctions against Baghdad.

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## Indian exit polls point to new hung parliament

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's dominant Hindu will fall short of a majority in national polls which will be held on Sunday. A snap exit poll confirmed that the country's largest party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), would win 29 seats in parliament, 29 short of a clear majority. The BJP, which had been in power since 1996, would be challenged by a renewed alliance of the Congress party and the outgoing multi-party United Front (118). But the key to who will form the next government could be held by a collection of small, unaffiliated minor regional parties, holding 11 seats, and when they are asked to get away to power with 38 seats. Five seats have yet to be counted.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية، الراي

## Iraq says U.S., U.K. resolution aimed to sabotage Annan deal

Albright: There are some who want to reject agreement, start bombing tomorrow. But I don't think majority of American people want that. And I'm certain the world would neither understand nor accept it

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ ACCUSED Britain and the United States Saturday of trying to sabotage the deal hammered out by U.N. chief Kofi Annan to defuse the arms inspection crisis.

Oil Minister Amer Rashid said a British attempt to enslave the deal brokered by Secretary-General Annan in Baghdad earlier this week in a new U.N. Security Council resolution was "totally unnecessary."

"This move by the British administration, supported by the American administration, is totally unnecessary. They are doing it for a purely political agenda which they have against Iraq," he told a press conference.

Britain presented a revised version of its draft U.N. resolution Friday threatening Iraq with "very serious consequences" if it violates the agreement on U.N. weapons inspections of presidential sites.

The new draft is a variation on an earlier resolution offered by Britain, but maintains a clause interpreted as giving the United States the go-ahead for future military action against Iraq.

According to the text, the Security Council "stresses... that any violation would have very serious consequences for Iraq."

The new proposal was co-sponsored by Japan, which should accelerate its consideration at the next formal meeting of the Security Council on Monday.

The council's 15 members were sharply divided by the original wording of the text, with permanent members Russia, France and China expressing dissatisfaction.

Mr. Rashid said the United States and Britain had a "hidden political agenda" on Iraq, and the dispute over access for U.N. inspectors to eight presidential sites was a "fallacy" masking true U.S. intentions.

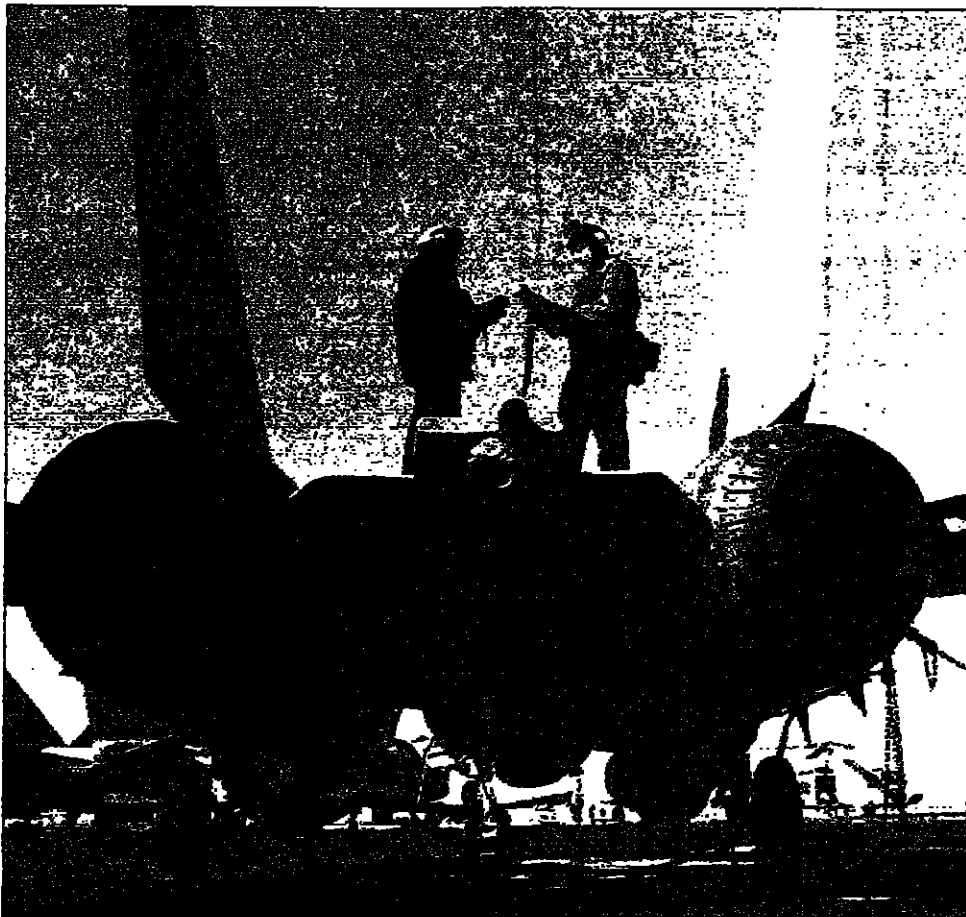
"They (the Americans) want to undermine the sovereignty of Iraq, they want to break Iraq, they want to control the oil fields."

"It is short-term thinking. If they have long-term thinking, they have to sit down and have dialogue with Iraq."

The deal agreed by Mr. Annan on a last-ditch mission to stave off a U.S. military strike on Iraq provides for a "special group" of diplomats and disarmament experts from the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) to inspect presidential sites.

Iraq had previously declared the sites off limits to UNSCOM inspectors on sovereignty grounds, leading Washington to threaten military action unless Baghdad backed down and granted UNSCOM unfettered access to all sites.

Iraq's official press also lambasted Britain and the U.S. on Saturday, accusing the two



U.S. BUILDUP REMAINS IN GULF: Two crewmen are dwarfed by the tail fins of an F14 fighter as they do some maintenance work on the USS Independence Saturday. The Independence is one of two U.S. aircraft carriers currently on duty in the Gulf (AP photo)

countries of trying to trigger a new crisis.

"The United States and Great Britain are trying to hinder the work of U.N. inspectors on the presidential sites... with the aim of provoking a new crisis which could be used by America to launch a generalised and immediate strike," said Al Jumhouriyah.

The paper also condemned Washington for trying to link the issue of Kuwaiti prisoners of war to the lifting of the U.N. embargo imposed on Iraq after its 1990 invasion of neighbouring Kuwait.

"Firstly they are all missing and the lifting of the embargo has nothing to do with this issue," said the paper, referring to the POW issue.

Kuwait says 600 of its nationals are missing from Iraq occupation of the emirate. Iraq denies holding any Kuwaiti prisoners.

Babel, the newspaper run by Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's elder son Uday, criticised "the obstinacy of America and Great Britain in maintaining its military concentration in the Gulf."

Both countries have refused to withdraw military reinforcements sent to the Gulf during the latest crisis until the accord signed by Mr. Annan can be tested by UNSCOM.

"This military buildup does not only threaten Iraq but also Iran, to a large extent, in addition to the political aim of terrorising the Arabs and forcing them to normalise their relations with Israel," said Babel.

Under ceasefire terms ending the 1991 Gulf war, UNSCOM must certify that Iraq no longer has any weapons of mass destruction before U.N. sanctions imposed on the country after

its invasion of Kuwait can be lifted.

Mr. Rashid insisted Iraq was prepared to work with UNSCOM and its outspoken chief Richard Butler, who is expected in Iraq in the next few weeks, and to have a "constructive relationship" with the body.

But he warned: "They have to work according to the mandate of U.N. Security Council resolutions. Outside this we

will have problems."

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said on Friday she felt cautiously optimistic that U.N. weapons inspectors would be given access to weapons sites in Iraq.

"This step back by Iraq is a step forward for our policy for containing the threat that is posed by Saddam Hussein," Ms. Albright told a lunch

(Continued on page 3)

## Iraq cannot export over \$4b worth of oil — minister

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq is currently exporting 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and has a production capacity of 2.3 million bpd, Oil Minister Amir Muhammad Rashid told a news conference on Saturday.

He said production capacity could be increased to 2.65 million bpd in two to three months if the United Nations agreed to supply Iraq with the spare parts its oil sector needed.

"We are now exporting at an average of 1.2 million bpd because of the decline in oil prices to \$11.5 a barrel," said Mr. Rashid, speaking on the anniversary of Iraq's 1973 oil industry nationalisation.

"Our present capacity is 2.65 million barrels a day, which we can achieve in two to three months if the necessary requirements for safe operations of our oil fields have been provided, and we will go up to three million bpd in another three months and to 3.5 million bpd after one year to go back to our production capacity before the aggression [the U.S.-led Gulf war]," he said.

Mr. Rashid said that under present circumstances Iraq would be unable to export more than \$4 billion worth of oil under the third six-month phase of its U.N. oil-for-food deal.

This would be well below the \$5.25 billion allowed in the six-month period under a recent U.N. Security Council resolution designed to increase the amount of food and medicine Iraq could buy to alleviate problems faced by the Iraqi people as a result of U.N. sanctions.

"Iraq has not rejected the [new] resolution and it has acted positively toward it," he said. "However, we have emphasised that we cannot export quantities more than what amounts to \$4 billion during six months because of the production limitation, and also because of the deterioration of prices and the oil market."

Iraq is currently exporting oil worth \$2 billion every six months under a deal signed with the United Nations which started in December 1996.

## Ma'an curfew lifted

'Tension between police, residents remains high'

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government lifted a week-long curfew on the southern city of Ma'an on Saturday but kept a heavy security presence after having restored order following unrest sparked by pro-Iraqi protests, residents and officials said.

Life was slowly returning to normal in the over 30,000-strong town after the army completed its pullout at dawn, they added.

Residents said blue armoured personnel carriers belonging to the elite police forces, were still patrolling main streets and guarding key intersections and government installations to prevent possible violence.

Schools and businesses reopened and telephone lines were restored, but several civil servants stayed away from their offices.

Several inhabitants, however, said tension remained high.

Many said residents were critical of emergency measures applied by teams of security forces who mounted house-to-house searches and confiscated large quantities of firearms and explosives in a tribal city where possession of weapons is an established custom.

"Plainclothes and anti-riot police are seen everywhere across the city and police patrols are present in almost all streets," independent Lower House Deputy Walid Awajan (Ma'an) said.

"The situation is quiet, but there are some provocations by police officers against residents," Mr. Awajan told the Jordan Times.

"Frankly, we hold Interior

Minister Nather Rasheed and Public Security Department chief Lieutenant General Nasouh Muhieddine Marzouka responsible for what happened in Ma'an," Mr. Awajan said.

"Had they allowed notables to intervene, things would not have escalated," he explained, echoing common heard views across the city, once a thriving transit point for lorries carrying Iraqi-bound commodities.

"The curfew imposed on the city was very cruel and the treatment of police forces was very tough," Mr. Awajan said.

"The measures imposed on the city were not justified," Deputy Nayef Kreishan told Reuters. "There is a feeling that they were meant to humiliate people."

Authorities announced at the end of house searches late on Friday they had seized over 460 pieces of various weapons along with large amounts of ammunition and 36 kilograms of narcotics.

The government, worried about a repeat of pro-Iraqi fervour witnessed during the 1990-91 Gulf crisis, banned demonstrations. Hundreds of baton-wielding police were sent to disperse marches in Amman and Irbid.

Residents blamed unrest in Ma'an, usually a traditional bedrock of support for the government, on rising poverty and unemployment as well as the use of force, including tear gas, to disperse hundreds of marchers.

The government, which arrested the head of the Engineers Association Leith Shbeilat on the eve of the

Ma'an unrest, blamed disturbances on a minority of radical elements bent on destabilising Jordan.

Government officials suggested that some of those responsible might be linked to foreign governments. Mr. Shbeilat, still in detention, is expected to be tried by the State Security Court for fomenting unrest, his third such trial in five years.

Ma'an deputies had for days pleaded with the government to lift the curfew to ease much hardship.

Restrictions on movement, power cuts and closure of essential shops including bakeries and pharmacies, caused widespread shortages and inconveniences.

The curfew also prevented at least five families from conducting funerals to bury relatives who died of natural causes during last week.

Meanwhile, the Jordanian chapter of the Cairo-based Arab Organisation for Human Rights said the office had received several complaints from Ma'an residents.

A statement by the organisation claimed that houses were illegally searched and many people were beaten up by policemen, including teenagers. "Even a handicapped girl was subjected to beatings," it said.

"The organisation denounces these measures and demands an end to anything that hurts human dignity and curbs freedom," it said. "The organisation also demands the release of all detainees."

## Algeria's president says rebels will be defeated

### Seven more deaths in Algeria

ALGIERS (AFP) — Seven people were murdered overnight in Ouled Aissa, some 80 kilometres south of Algiers near Medea, security services announced Saturday.

Security forces immediately launched a search for those responsible for this "cowardly and inhuman" act, the statement said.

The attack took place just hours before President Liamine Zeroual was to arrive in the Medea region.

On Thursday, 10 people were killed and 16 wounded in a bomb explosion in the region.

His supporters were

Mr. Zeroual's remarks were broadcast by state radio. His trip was widely highlighted by the media. The radio said Medea province, the hottest point of the Algerian violence, symbolised the government's struggle to restore peace across the country.

Western estimates say more than 65,000 people have been killed in a wave of violence that has gripped Algeria since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election in which Islamists had taken a commanding lead.

Mr. Zeroual had first visited Medea in November 1995 when he campaigned for a presidential election on the promises of reestablishing peace.

More than 1,200 civilians, mostly in remote villages, have been killed in worst massacres in late December and early January. The carnage then triggered a worldwide condemnations of the killings in Algeria.

The Algerian government, under fire from human rights groups on its apparent failures to protect the lives of civilians, blamed Islamists for the massacres.

## Israel seizes smuggled weapons

TEL AVIV (R) — The Israeli army said on Saturday it had captured a large cache of weapons in the West Bank and arrested a Palestinian suspected of smuggling them from Jordan overnight.

"Many weapons were smuggled from Jordan across the Dead Sea... a Palestinian suspected of smuggling the weapons was arrested," an army spokeswoman said.

She said the cache included 60 AK-47 assault rifles, M-16 sub-machine guns, hunting rifles, pistols and large quantities of ammunition.

The army said the man was under interrogation.

Army radio said West Bank army commander, Major General Uzi Dayan, told Israeli military reporters it was not clear if the suspect was working on behalf of a "terrorist" group or was only a smuggler.

The radio quoted Maj. Gen. Dayan as saying the army was also investigating whether the man was working on behalf of the Palestinian National Authority.

## Iran-Europe rapprochement challenges U.S. policy

By Paul Taylor  
Reuters diplomatic editor

LONDON — Almost unnoticed in the shadow of the Iraq crisis, the European Union (EU) decided this week to normalise relations with Iran in an indirect challenge to a U.S. policy of containment of the Islamic republic.

The 15-nation EU dropped the adjective "critical" from its official designation of dialogue with Tehran, although ministers were keen to stress the new high-level contacts would not be uncritical.

They still plan to raise alleged Iranian support for terrorism, efforts to

acquire weapons of mass destruction and hostility to the Middle East peace process in their talks with Iran, but they also want to encourage signs of moderation in Tehran's international behaviour.

European companies are also keen to pursue business opportunities in this strategically located oil-

producing state with a potential market of 60 million citizens.

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi welcomed the step as "a realisation of a better understanding by the EU of the important position of Iran and the role Iran can play as a country and chairman of the Organisation of the

Islamic Conference."

But the European move could be the prelude to a new transatlantic rift over relations with Iran.

The U.S. State Department is due to announce soon whether a \$2 billion gas development deal signed by France's Total SA is "sanctionable" under a U.S. law that seeks to punish foreign firms that invest more than \$20 million a year in Iran's oil and

gas sector.

Although British Petroleum and Royal Dutch/Shell have opened offices in Tehran, both have bigger interests in the United States than Total and seem less likely to risk U.S. retribution by making major investments in Iran in the short-term, oil analysts say.

The Total decision, which does not automatically trigger sanctions, had

been expected by mid-February but diplomats said it was delayed to avoid triggering a West-West crisis while Washington sought European support in the standoff with Iraq over U.N. arms inspections.

"Now that the Iraq crisis is over for the moment, I would expect Washington to announce that the Total deal is sanctionable but defer a decision on what sanctions it will impose," a

senior European diplomat said.

The EU is united in rejecting any American attempt to impose its national law on European firms trading in third countries, setting the stage for a potential trade war unless transatlantic problem management gains the upper hand.

U.S. officials say the real

(Continued on page 3)



## Lebanese warlord says trial unconstitutional

Former of Samir he 1987 Muslim id Kara- d council l the con-

n's highest sion which t that he was dhorities' bias him and left mer militia lead- ed of involvement ofile crimes. by the head of Lebanon's highest judicial authority that he was accused of planning the murder in which a remote-controlled bomb blew up a helicopter in which Karami was travelling, he said: "I apologise for not answering any questions and I

can state my reasons. These days are not days of law and justice... I was handed over to the judicial council under an article of amnesty law which handed over to the council dozens of other cases including the attempt on the life of [current] Minister of the Displaced] Walid Junblatt in Paris," he said.

"I am the only one who is being brought to the judicial council for four years now," he added.

The government had ordered the amnesty for crimes committed during the civil war, but post-war crimes and certain high-profile killings like Karami's assassination which had already been referred to the judicial council were excluded.

Dr. Geagea said testimonies

in the case of a February 1994 bomb attack on a church north of Beirut which killed 11 worshippers revealed that "[current Electricity and Water Resources] Minister Elias Hobeika had supplied elements with weapons to assassinate Junblatt."

Dr. Geagea is the only sectarian militia leader from the civil war to have faced trial. Several former leaders of other militias are in the government or hold high state offices.

"When law becomes selective, it becomes invalid for its violation of the constitution and it brings down with it the authorities which do not treat all citizens equally," he added.

Dr. Geagea, who led the Lebanese Forces (LF) militia in the 1975-90 civil war, could face the death penalty if con-

victed. There is no appeal from this court's verdict.

The trial, which opened in December, marked the fifth time that Mr. Geagea, a Maronite Christian, has been charged with murder.

He is already serving three life sentences in an underground defence ministry cell for two 1990 murders and the attempted murder of then Defence Minister Michel Al Murr in 1991. All three sentences were commuted from death to life in jail.

Mr. Murr, a Greek Orthodox politician, is currently interior minister and deputy prime minister.

Dr. Geagea, first arrested after the 1994 church bombing, was acquitted of responsibility for that attack, but was sentenced to 10 years impris-

onment with hard labour for setting up a military faction after the government had disbanded all militias in 1991.

A Beirut magistrate has demanded the death penalty for Geagea for ordering Karami's killing, and for two top security officials of his LF group. Ghassan Tuma and Ghassan Menassa, for planning the murder.

Tuma and Menassa are being tried in absentia.

The magistrate also demanded life jail terms for 13 LF members and Lebanese Army Brigadier Khalil Matar for involvement in Karami's killing. Mr. Matar and three others from among the 13 appeared before the court on Friday. The others are on the run.



Masked Palestinians belonging to the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) Saturday burn pictures of American President Bill Clinton as they celebrate their 29th anniversary in the West Bank town of Ramallah. The protesters accused the United States of having a double standard regarding their dealings with Israel and said the Jewish state should be forced to abide by U.N. resolutions in the same way Iraq was (Reuters photo)

## Khatami intervenes in editor case — paper

TEHRAN (R) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami has intervened in the case of an Iranian newspaper editor and his death sentence for spying could be reviewed, a newspaper said on Saturday.

Morteza Firooz, a former editor-in-chief of the English-language daily Iran News, has been in custody on spying and adultery charges since May.

"The possibility exists now that charges against Firooz will be investigated in an ordinary court. It is said that the intervention by the president and the head of judiciary has been influential in this regard," the Jameh newspaper said.

The Persian-language daily, which is seen as pro-Khatami, gave no source for its report which it ran as an edi-

torial on its front page.

Earlier in February Iran's supreme court ratified a death sentence passed against Mr. Firooz by a closed court session.

An Iranian newspaper reported in February that Mr. Firooz had been found guilty of spying for France, Japan and South Korea.

"Jameh newspaper supports the re-investigation of

Firooz's case... holding an open trial with the presence of a jury is the demand of the fourth pillar of the republic [the press]," the paper said.

Iran in 1996 passed a law imposing the death sentence for espionage in a variety of areas not covered by earlier legislation, such as giving information to foreigners on the country's social conditions.

## Hizbollah says two fighters killed in south Lebanon

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Hizbollah Saturday said two of its members had been killed in fighting with Israeli occupation troops and their local militia allies in south Lebanon.

The group said in a statement that one of the guerrillas had been killed in clashes on Friday in which four Israeli soldiers were wounded, while the second had died in fighting on Feb. 24.

The deaths brought to nine the number of guerrillas killed in south Lebanon since the beginning of the year.

The group on Thursday killed three Israeli soldiers and wounded three, bringing the Israeli toll this year to four dead and 28 wounded. Last year, 39 soldiers were killed and 99 wounded.

An Israeli military spokesman had said one guerrilla was killed in the latest clash, after which Israeli warplanes launched their 26th air attacks against Lebanon in 1998.

Israel has occupied parts of south Lebanon since invading in 1978.

## Saudi Arabia, Iran to form committee to boost ties

DUBAI (R) — Iran and Saudi Arabia said on Saturday they had agreed to form a joint ministerial committee to work on boosting relations between the two Gulf states.

A joint statement carried by the Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said the committee "would hold meetings in Riyadh and Tehran to discuss means of improving bilateral relations."

The statement, issued during a 10-day visit to Riyadh by an Iranian dele-

gation led by Former Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani that started last Saturday, did not name the ministers appointed to the committee.

Relations between the two major oil producers has been tense since Iran's Islamic revolution in 1979.

Riyadh backed Baghdad in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war. It severed diplomatic relations with Tehran after more than 400 people, mostly Iranians, were killed in riots during the annual

pilgrimage to Mecca in 1987.

Ties were restored after Iran remained neutral in the 1991 Gulf war over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and have warmed since last year's election of Moham-

mad Khatami, seen as a moderate keen on improving Tehran's relations with its neighbours, as Iran's president.

Crown Prince Abdullah became the most senior Saudi official to visit Iran since the revolution when

he attended an Islamic summit in Tehran in December.

King Fahd and Mr. Rafsanjani held talks in Riyadh last weekend on regional and bilateral ties and the sagging oil prices.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who was president for eight years until President Khatami took over last August, heads the expediency council which makes long-term policies and advises supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

## Iran a serious danger to Israel — general

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Iran poses a serious threat to the existence of Israel because of its arsenal of long-range missiles and nuclear potential, a senior adviser to Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said Saturday.

"The Iranian threat could be critical to the existence of Israel

because of its surface-to-surface missiles and acquisition of a nuclear force," General David Ivry told Israel Radio.

He added that the Israeli armed forces were "prepared in case Iran puts its threats into action."

"Iran opposes the existence of Israel, the peace process and

supports the Hizbollah in southern Lebanon, both financially and materially," Gen. Ivry said.

The Iranian-backed Hizbollah spearheads a drive to force Israeli troops out of the buffer zone, set up in southern Lebanon in 1985 to prevent cross-border attacks.

An Israeli secret service agent

was arrested in Switzerland on Feb. 19 in an attempt to plant telephone-bugging equipment in an apartment building in Bern.

The Israeli and Swiss authorities have not identified the target, but the Israeli press reported that it was a member of Hizbollah.

## Algeria rights monitor reports on missing persons

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria's official human rights monitor was asked to look into 706 missing persons cases in 1997, against 219 the year before. La Nouvelle Republique reported Saturday.

The newspaper quoted the president of the National Observatory on Human

Rights, Kamel Rezzag-Bara, as saying the group had resolved 514 cases last year, most of which could not be "blamed" on security forces.

An unspecified number of missing persons had in fact left the country without telling anyone or had joined the armed Islamist groups mounting guerrilla operations in

Algeria, Mr. Rezzag-Bara said.

Some of the cases were solved when missing persons were found killed or were arrested after clashes with security forces, he added.

"But relatives convinced they were kidnapped by security forces have asked the Observatory to try to find

them," he said, adding: "Sometimes families do not believe our reports when they show that a missing person has become a terrorist."

Algeria has been torn by violence since 1992 when the army intervened to cancel elections that the now-banned Islamist Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win.

## Egypt arrests 10 Islamic militants

CAIRO (AFP) — Ten suspected members of Egypt's main armed Islamist group, the Gamaa Islamiyah, have been arrested in the southern province of Minya, police said Saturday.

Among those arrested was Fuji Abdul Aziz Mohammed, described by police as a senior Gamaa leader, who was found with an automatic rifle taken from a police officer killed by Islamists.

Mr. Mohammed and the nine other suspected Gamaa members are all suspected of having taken part in attacks in the Minya region, police said.

## Iraqi FM to meet Annan on increased oil-for-food deal

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqi Foreign Minister Mohammad Said Al Sahhaf is to meet U.N. chief Kofi Annan to discuss the enhanced oil-for-food programme approved by the U.N. Security Council, U.N. officials here said Saturday.

"There is planned to be a meeting in New York between the foreign minister and the secretary general to identify the various policy issues that need to be resolved before the new programme begins," U.N. humanitarian affairs coordinator Denis Halliday said.

The U.N. Security Council

unanimously voted last week to more than double to \$5.2 billion the value of oil Iraq is permitted to export every six months to pay for humanitarian imports.

The current phase of the oil-for-food deal runs from December 1997 to June 1998.

But Mr. Halliday said that implementation of the expanded deal was not expected before next April.

"The timing of [this] is a little uncertain yet but might be in, let's say, April," he said.

He gave no date for the meeting between the U.N. chief and Mr. Sahhaf.

## Britain's top military man visits Kuwait

KUWAIT (R) — Britain's top military official Saturday inspected British forces rushed to Kuwait this month amid heightened tension with Iraq, a British spokesman said.

Chief of the defence staff, General Charles Guthrie, visited Ali Al Salem airbase, 65 kilometres northwest of Kuwait city and 55 kilometres south of the Iraqi border, where eight British ground-attack Tornado bombers are stationed.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

16:10 ..... Pumpkin Patch  
16:20 ..... Pink Panther  
16:30 ..... Conan the Adventurer  
17:00 French Programme — Don't Dream  
18:00 Children Drama — Skipper  
19:00 ..... Le Journal  
19:15 A Tour in France (Educational)  
19:30 ..... News Headlines  
19:35 America's Funniest People  
20:00 Doc. — "Killing for Living"  
20:30 Doc. — People and Places in Africa  
21:10 ..... Renegade  
22:00 ..... News in English  
22:30 ..... North and South  
23:40 ..... Comedy — End of T.X.

### PRAYER TIMES

04:43 ..... Fajr  
06:00 ..... (Sunrise) Doha  
11:48 ..... Dhuhur  
15:04 ..... 'Asr  
15:36 ..... Maghreb  
18:53 ..... 'Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh, Tel. 5920740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

### Terra Sancta Church Tel.

4622366

### Anglican Church Tel.

4624853/4624811

### St. Ahrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel.

771751

### Amman International Church Tel.

865897

### German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel.

5688404

### The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel.

811295

### Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel.

4654932

### St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel.

5661757

### Church of the Annunciation Tel.

4637440

### Greek Orthodox Church Tel.

4623541

### Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel.

5920146

### The Uniate Catholic Church Tel.

4624757

### The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel.

4614190

### Evangelical Free Church Tel.

892679

Teh Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church 771531

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

### ment of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to drop

slightly, skies cloudy to partly

cloudy, winds westerly moderate

to active, and there will be a

chance of scattered showers. In

Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy,

rainy, winds northerly moderate,

and seas calm.

### Min/Max. temp.

Amman ..... 05/11

Aqaba ..... 11/20

Deserts ..... 04/13

Jordan Valley ..... 10/20

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 12, Aqaba 22 Humidity

readings: Amman 57 per cent,

Aqaba 34 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

### AMMAN:

Dr. Nasser Ibrahim ..... 830432

Dr. Bahjat Bader ..... 832642

Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi ..... 893542

Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 736072

Firas pharmacy ..... 661912

Ferdows pharmacy ..... 778336

Al Asema pharmacy ..... 637055

Nairoukh pharmacy ..... 623672

Al Salam pharmacy ..... 636730

Yacoub pharmacy ..... 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy ..... 637660

Najib pharmacy ..... 847632

Water Authority ..... 5680100

J. Electricity Authority ..... 815615

Electric Power Co. .... 4636381

RJ Flight Information ..... 44-53200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 44-53200

IRIBID: (09)990990

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre ..... 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity ..... 464281/6

Akileh Maternity ..... 464244/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman ..... 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital ..... 5669131

University Hospital ..... 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital ..... 566722/9

The Islamic, Abdali ..... 5666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen ..... 777101/3

Al-Bashir ..... 775111/26

Army, Marka ..... 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital ..... 5602240/50

Amal Hospital ..... 5674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery ..... 865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)905060

Bn Sina Hospital ..... (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

### HOSPITALS

IRIBID: (09)990990

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital (02)247100

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre ..... 813813/32

Khalidi Maternity ..... 464281/6

Akileh Maternity ..... 464244/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman ..... 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani ..... 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital ..... 5669131

University Hospital ..... 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital ..... 566722/9

The Islamic, Abdali ..... 5666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali ..... 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen ..... 777101/3

Al-Bashir ..... 775111/26

Army, Marka ..... 891611/15

Queen





GRADUATION CEREMONY: A graduate from the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy (JID) receives his diploma Saturday at the University of Jordan. JID President Kamel Abu Jaber asked the diplomats to serve the country with the knowledge and education they received at the institute (Petra photo)

## Iraqi public figures send petition urging Shbeilat's release

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Twenty-one Iraqi public figures, including members of parliament and intellectuals, urged the Jordanian government to release opposition leader Leith Shbeilat, who was arrested in connection with last week's pro-Iraq riots, Agence France Presse (AFP) reported Saturday.

In a petition to Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, they demanded "the freedom of the great militant Leith Shbeilat and the halt of preventive measures restricting his nationalist activities," according to AFP.

The news agency added that the message was entrusted

ed to Jordan's chargé d'affaires in Baghdad, Adel Sweidan.

Officials contacted by the Jordan Times late Saturday, however, said they were not aware of the petition.

Mr. Shbeilat, who is also the outgoing president of the Jordanian Engineers Association (JEA), was formally charged by the state prosecutor last week with inciting the Feb. 20-21 riots and slandering His Majesty King Hussein.

He was arrested on the morning of Feb. 20 upon his return from the southern city of Ma'an, where, hours later, a pro-Iraq rally, organized in defiance of a government ban on all such public demonstrations, left one dead and over

20 wounded.

Mr. Shbeilat, to whom Iraqi authorities in January handed over 68 Jordanian prisoners detained there, was pardoned by King Hussein in 1992 and in 1996, after receiving prison terms ranging from three years to life imprisonment on charges of treason and lese majeste.

He is being defended by three attorneys, Najib Rashdan, president of the Jordan Bar Association, Hussein Mjalli, and former Prime Minister and Director of the General Intelligence Department (GID) Ahmad Obeidat.

Dr. Majali has accused Mr. Shbeilat of "instigating people against the government, which he described as Zionist and hostile to Iraq."

## Man sentenced to life in prison for November 1996 murder of brother, sister-in-law

By Rana Hussein  
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Saturday sentenced a 48-year-old man to life in prison with hard labour after he was found guilty of murdering his brother and sister-in-law in Mafraq in November 1996.

The court tribunal found Adel Michael guilty of shooting and killing his brother Bassam, and his sister-in-law Nuha Hanna on Nov. 14 over a feud concerning a piece of land.

According to court documents, the defendant had

numerous quarrels with his brother over a 500-dunum plot of land and "plotted to kill him."

On the morning of the incident, the defendant went to his brother's house, and when Bassam opened the door, "Mr. Michael drew his gun and shot him several times in the head and chest."

The defendant then entered the house and shot his sister-in-law several times in front of her children before leaving the scene.

Saturday's verdict was handed down by Judges Mohammad Ajarmeh, Mifleh Mubeidin and Issa

Hamdan.

Justices Ajarmeh and Mubeidin decided to amend the premeditated charges originally pressed against the suspect, "because it was proven during the trial the it was not a premeditated murder."

Dissenting Judge Hamdan, however, insisted that it "it was a premeditated murder and asked for a tougher punishment."

Also Saturday, the court sentenced two men each to a 15-year-imprisonment term with hard labour after they were found guilty of killing a 28-year-old man in

Mafraq in June 1997.

Yousef Theifallah, 29, and Samer Kamal, 19, were found guilty of shooting and killing Musa Kublan in the Hussein suburb of Mafraq on June 10.

Court documents stated that the two defendants, along with an 18-year-old woman, met with the victim on the morning of the incident and offered him a ride.

It added that the four then went, bought alcohol and drove around Mafraq, "but the victim felt that his friends were intending to kill him because of old feuds."

"Mr. Kublan asked to get out of the car, and when he started walking away to escape, the two men followed him. Mr. Theifallah grabbed a rock and struck his head, then Mr. Kamal drew a gun and shot him twice in the head and left," the court said.

The two men asked the woman not to tell anyone about the incident, but the woman informed police a week later.

All verdicts will be automatically reviewed by the Court of Cassation within the next 30 days.

## Ministry begins survey of national heritage buildings

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment has begun a survey of old buildings constructed between 1700 and 1950 for the purpose of restoring and protecting them as part of Jordan's national heritage.

Mervet Jubesh, head of the architectural heritage department at the ministry, said the restoration work aims at saving this heritage for future generations and entails drawing up regulations governing methods to protect these sites and raise awareness among local communities for this purpose.

In the course of the survey, department teams will locate and collect information on architectural heritage sites in various governorates and document them in a national register.

The survey will mainly target Salt, Samad, Jerash, Um Qais, Irbid and Amman, according to Ms. Jubesh, who noted that the city of Salt alone contains 356 of these architectural heritage buildings which, along with others, have to be protected from possible demolition due to their old age.

The ministry has drawn up plans for training personnel on restoration work and has prepared for the creation of a special library to house publications and reference material about the heritage sites, she stated.

Ms. Jubesh said an agreement has been reached with the Department of Antiquities giving it the right to appropriate any building with historical value. Coordination and cooperation with the department will be maintained for the sake of protecting all heritage sites in the Kingdom, she added.

## Prime minister, visiting Algerian official discuss bilateral ties

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday said Jordan was keen on strengthening ties with Algeria in various fields, particularly the judiciary.

The prime minister was speaking during a meeting with Said Busheir, head of the Algerian constitutional council, and Minister of Justice Riyad Shakaa.

Discussion at the meeting touched on a number of issues of mutual interest, according to a statement after the meeting which quoted the Algerian official as expressing his country's satisfaction with the level of cooperation between Algeria and Jordan.

Earlier Saturday, Mr. Busheir met Lower House

of Parliament Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour and briefed him on the role of the Algerian constitutional council.

The two sides reviewed areas of cooperation between the judicial and legislative institutions in the two countries, according to a statement issued after their meeting. Mr. Srour was quoted as

expressing Parliament's desire to maintain strong cooperation with the Algerian national assembly and coordination between the positions of the two parliaments at regional and international meetings.

Several House members were also present at the meeting.

## JMA committee announces financial corruption investigation nearly completed

AMMAN (J.T.) — A special committee created by the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) Saturday announced that it expects to complete an investigation into financial corruption cases within the next two weeks and submit its report to the JMA's general assembly meeting scheduled for the end of next month.

JMA sources were quoted by the local press Saturday as saying that initial information

points to the involvement of a number of leading association members in these cases, which are connected with embezzlement of JMA funds.

According to the report, up to JD750,000 may be missing, of which JD724,000 belonged to the JMA's pension fund.

Committee sources were quoted as saying that the committee is in possession of documents proving that an association employee, whose

name was withheld, embezzled JD9,000. These sources said three other association employees have already been transferred to the judicial authorities for earlier embezzlement cases and are currently in jail.

The committee is also investigating reports of huge losses resulting from an investment of JD5 million in the Amman Financial Market. They said the investment was made without the

approval of the JMA board, which had authorised the investment of only JD500,000.

The sources said the committee is expected to ask the board at its meetings tomorrow to refer two cases, in which the present JMA president and the former deputy treasurer are accused of issuing two cheques together worth JD34,000 without the board's approval, to the judicial authorities.

## BBC to begin Arabic service broadcasts on FM

By Hind-Lara Mango  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) today officially launches its Arabic service on frequency modulation (FM), an event coinciding with the BBC's 60th anniversary of its Arabic service.

For the last 75 years, the BBC has broadcast on short wave and in the Middle East on medium wave through Cyprus.

"But with changing technology and competitive pressures, we find audiences wishing to have better quality signals...an FM signal is a much more friendly and competitive signal, even better than medi-

um wave," said Sam Younger, managing director of BBC World Service.

Mr. Younger told the Jordan Times that the BBC Arabic Service is trying to attract a younger audience in addition to its established listeners. He said the BBC has been looking for opportunities to air programmes on FM and last year an FM frequency was established in Doha, Jordan will become the second Arab country to carry the BBC Arabic service locally, he said.

According to Gamon McLellan, head of BBC Arabic Service, a feasibility study conducted by his organisation indicated that the service was listened to by half a million people in Amman.

"Our research findings show that in Amman, we have an audience of decision-makers and highly educated people, with 42 per cent of them being holders of higher education degrees," said Mr. McLellan.

Programmes offered on the channel, broadcasting on 103.1 FM, will range from entertainment to political news.

Two commercial stations, namely the Middle East Broadcasting Corporation (MEBC) and Radio Monte Carlo, are transmitting on the FM frequency in Jordan, drawing claims by critics that this is unfair competition for Radio Jordan.

But proponents of more stations believe that people will

switch to these stations for a "broader perspective and agenda," as one observer put it.

Mr. Younger said he believed that international broadcasters will complement rather than compete with Radio Jordan.

"We are not in competition with Jordanian radio at all...people will have to continue to listen to local radio for local news, as the BBC by nature won't be broadcasting local news...it airs its programmes right across the Arab World," added Mr. McLellan.

Mr. McLellan said research has suggested that the majority of BBC listeners in Jordan listen to everything, including Radio Jordan.

## what's going on

### Iraq says U.S., U.K. resolution aimed to sabotage Annan deal

(Continued from page 1)

meeting of city business and political leaders.

"Iraq has made a commitment, in as public a way as possible, to abide by U.N. resolutions and provide full access for U.N. inspectors," she said.

"I know there are some who want to reject this agreement and start bombing tomorrow. But I don't think the majority of the American people want that. And I'm certain the world would neither understand nor accept it," she said.

She said the deal also would make it easier to sell the rest of the world on bombing attacks on Iraq if U.N. weapons inspectors are again barred from arms sites.

"...Having made this deal in front of the whole world, if he [Mr. Hussein] reneges on this deal, there will be no question about the fact that force is the only way to go," Ms. Albright said in response to query from the audience.

In an apparent concession to Iraq, the deal also called for the formation of a new group of U.N. inspectors and senior U.N. diplomats to conduct inspections at these presidential sites.

Ms. Albright said Mr. Butler would not be weakened by the agreement with Iraq.

"I was very pleased yesterday when Ambassador Richard Butler, the chairman of the United

Nations group UNSCOM, made very clear that he will continue to be in charge of the process, that this will be done by professional inspectors, that the reports from this group will be given by him and that he will have what we are calling operational control," she said.

Earlier on Friday, Ms. Albright toured the headquarters of the U.S. Southern Command (Southcom), the U.S. military's base for operations in the Caribbean and Latin America and was briefed by Southern commander in chief, General Charles Wilhelm.

She struck a cautious note with reporters when asked about Iraq. "I am cautious, I'm taking this one step at a time and insisting that we test as soon as possible with inspections," she said.

Ms. Albright, U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen and National Security Advisor Sandy Berger were heckled last week during a town meeting in Ohio to make the case for military action against Iraq.

Making a joking reference to Ohio after receiving a standing ovation on Friday Ms. Albright, widely popular in Miami for her staunch support of the U.S. economic embargo against Cuba, said: "Well, that's a lot better than hecklers." "I have always said that nothing could be better than coming to Miami, and especially after I've had a hard time."

### Iran-Europe rapprochement challenges U.S. policy

(Continued from page 1)

issue is not "extraterritoriality" but containing a "rogue state" which they assert is undermining Arab-Israeli peace efforts and working to develop nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them.

EU officials are hoping that the debate in the United States about policy towards Iran, spurred by the election last May of the relatively conciliatory Mohammad Khatami as president and his opening to dialogue with the West, will lead to a rethinking of the containment policy.

They also believe the lessons of the crisis with Baghdad, in which key U.S. ally Saudi Arabia pursued a rapprochement with Tehran while refusing facilities for

an American strike on Iraq, may hasten a change of heart in Washington.

U.S. officials say there is now serious debate in the Clinton administration about how to deal with Iran, with doves in the State Department confronting hawks in the Defence Department and the intelligence community.

Israel, which strongly influences Washington's view of the Middle East, has stepped up public warnings that Iran is a greater threat to regional security than Iraq.

Analysts say the European rapprochement with Tehran can still be stymied by hard-liners in the Iranian justice system, security services and parliament who have taken or threatened action against Europeans.

Hard-liners used the ninth anniversary of the late Aya-

tollah Ruhollah Khomeini's "fatwa" against British writer Salman Rushdie this month to reassert their determination to see him killed, causing indignation in Britain, which holds the EU's rotating presidency.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said on Tuesday that improved relations with Tehran depended strongly on the fate of a German sentenced to death in Iran for having sexual relations out of wedlock with a Muslim woman.

And any repetition of the attacks on Iranian dissidents in Europe, which led to the suspension of the EU dialogue with Iran last year and a temporary recall of European envoys from Tehran, would be bound to deal a blow to the new relationship.

## Students plan hunger strike to protest warnings

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Three science students at the University of Jordan are planning a hunger strike beginning Monday to protest a faculty decision to give them final warnings after which they would be dismissed, one of the students said Saturday.

Hamzeh Hasanat, a student at the faculty of science, said the three decided to go on the hunger strike to press the university to drop punishments imposed on them.

Mr. Hasanat, Abdul Rahman Matar and Ihab Asa'ad received different punishments for their role in a December occasion to commemorate the second anniversary of the death of Yahya Ayash, the Hamas leader responsible for its suicide bombings.

Ayash, nicknamed the Engineer, was killed by a booby-trapped cellular phone believed to have been planted by Mossad, the Israeli secret service.

On Wednesday, students

staged a rally inside the university to protest the punishment of their colleagues by the administration.

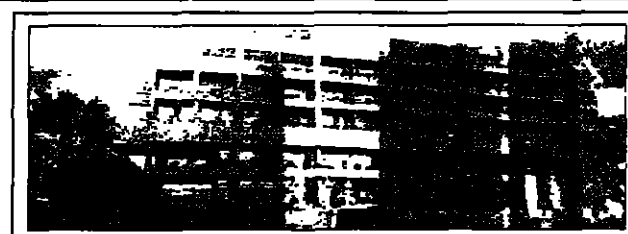
Following the rally, university guards attempted to confiscate a loudspeaker used by the protesters, leading to a clash.

The students claimed that guards attacked them but dean of students at the university, Salman Bdour, denied that guards had attacked them and accused the students of assaulting the guards.

Meanwhile, a university student who was detained by the authorities on Monday was released Thursday.

Mohammed Haj, a member of the students' council, dominated by Muslim Brotherhood students, alleged that he was arrested by plainclothes police and interrogated.

"They [the police] asked whether I was responsible for printing unauthorised statements and distributing them on campus," Mr. Haj said.



### Radisson SAS flag flies in Jordan

TWO OF Jordan's most established hotels have been rebranded Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide following full-scale renovation.

The flag of Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide, Europe's fastest-growing first-class hotel chain, now flies over the Radisson SAS Hotel Amman (formerly the Philadelphia Hotel) and the Radisson SAS Reson Aqaba (formerly the Holiday Hotel).

"We are excited to bring the Radisson SAS name to these hotels," said Kurt Ritter, president and CEO, Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide. "We are committed to bringing world-class service and facilities to each of the locations in which we operate. With several more European and Middle Eastern locations in the final stages of negotiation, Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide has created a solid base for further expansion throughout Europe and the Middle East."

Radisson SAS Hotels Worldwide also operates properties in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Kuwait with projects under construction in Muscat, Oman and in Tabba and Hurgada in Egypt.

The Radisson SAS Hotel Amman, which provides the largest conference facilities in Jordan with its column-free Royal Hall which can seat up to 2,000, now boasts 275 spacious Deluxe and Royal Club rooms, all equipped to the highest standards.

Seventy rooms have been converted into the Royal Club executive floors.

The Radisson SAS Reson Aqaba, is the only four-star hotel in the popular Red Sea resort. It now features 268 spacious guest rooms, including Business Class rooms, Duplex Family Units and suites overlooking the Gulf of Aqaba.



## Eight dead, 25 injured as 2 bombs explode in Karachi

KARACHI (AFP) — At least eight people were killed and 25 injured yesterday when two bombs exploded almost simultaneously in Pakistan's biggest city of Karachi Saturday.

The explosions followed a train bombing and a bus blast in central Punjab province Thursday and Friday, in which nine people were killed and dozens injured.

The wounded, some said to be in critical condition in hospital, included several children, the official said.

Police blamed the bombings on feuding political factions, criminal mafias and Muslim sectarian militants.



Police examine the site of a bomb blast in Karachi (Reuters photo)

## Murdoch's former Asian flagship takes him to book over Patten

HONG KONG (AFP) — Media mogul Rupert Murdoch's former Asian flagship, The South China Morning Post (SCMP), took the tycoon to book Saturday for his alleged attempt to gag former Hong Kong Governor Chris Patten.

Mr. Murdoch denied Friday trying to censor a book by Mr. Patten, the last governor of Hong Kong, because it criticised the Chinese regime, but admitted he did not want to publish it.

Mr. Patten has since taken "East Meets West" from Mr. Murdoch's HarperCollins to rival Macmillan amid a torrid headline war over alleged censorship.

The SCMP, at one time a highly profitable member of the News Corp., stable but critical of China ahead of the British handover of the territory last July, commented on the irony of Mr. Patten's book possibly being boosted to the best-seller list thanks to Mr. Murdoch.

## EU attacks Belarus over treatment of opposition activists

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The European Union has criticised Belarus over its treatment of two teenage opposition activists who have been given prison sentences for painting anti-government slogans on public buildings.

The youths, members of the Youth Front — part of the opposition nationalist Popular Front — were arrested in Minsk last August, several days after having scrawled opposition slogans on municipal buildings in Stolbtsy, 60 kilometres south of the capital.

## Soviet commander who stormed Reichstag dies

MOSCOW (R) — The commander of the Red Army battalion which stormed the Reichstag in Berlin at the end of World War II and raised the Soviet flag over it died Friday, the Russian news agency reported.



Stepan Neustoyev, the former commander of the Red Army battalion which stormed the Reichstag in Berlin in 1945, died Friday, February 27. A photograph of two soldiers from Neustoyev's battalion hoisting the flag over the Reichstag became one of the most famous images of World War II (Reuters photo)

He (Khaldei) accepted it. He had to accept it. If not, then the next day he would not have been in Tass.

## Two Chinese dissidents arrested in pre-parliament clampdown

BEIJING (AFP) — Chinese police have arrested at least two dissidents in 24 hours as part of a growing security crackdown ahead of a key annual parliament meeting in Beijing.

Ma Lianggang was arrested early Saturday in eastern Hefei city, and Shanghai police picked up Zhang Rujun the previous afternoon, the Information Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Movement in China said.

The approach of the NPC's annual session, which opens next Thursday, has provoked a rash of open letters and petitions from dissidents demanding political reforms.

Six policemen arrived at the home of Mr. Ma, 38, a former Anhui University official, at 5:00 a.m. (2100 GMT Friday), and hauled him away while seizing numerous documents, the centre quoted the dissident's wife, Chen Yuhong, as saying.

The reports could not immediately be confirmed. At least three dissidents have been detained in China this week and a fourth was placed under house arrest.

Yang Qinheng was taken into custody without explanation after a raid Thursday on his home in Shanghai, and in southeastern Fuzhou city police have reportedly kept outspoken activist Lin Xinsu under house arrest since Monday.

First sent to jail after the government's brutal crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy movement in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, Mr. Ma has since spent a total of 41 months behind bars and was most recently sentenced to three years' probation in 1996.

## Swiss give Russians fresh lead in TV executive murder probe

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian investigators said Saturday Switzerland had provided a fresh lead in the murder of a popular television executive gunned down three years ago in a mafia-style hit, ITAR-TASS reported.

Vladislav Listyev, newly appointed head of the public ORT television station, was shot dead at the entrance to his home on March 1, 1995, by an unidentified gunman in an attack.

## Russia to provide uranium for German scientific reactor

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russia has agreed to provide Germany with enriched uranium for a scientific nuclear reactor, the Ria news agency said Saturday, citing the government press service.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has approved the deal and ordered the nuclear energy, finance and foreign ministries to conduct talks with the German authorities over the deal, Ria said.

Under the project, Russia will provide 1,200 kilograms of enriched uranium for the Munich II reactor over a 10-year period.

Germany is responsible for ensuring the nuclear material is not used for military purposes, and the shipments will be delivered under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency, the agency added.

## Sri Lanka to deport Chinese journalist over war reporting

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lanka is to expel Chinese journalist Jin Hui who was arrested and is being detained at a dreaded police unit following his report on a Tamil rebel attack against the navy, officials said Saturday.

The Police Criminal Investigations Department (CID) said they were ordered by the secretary to the ministry of defence, Chandrananda de Silva, to deport Mr. Jin, 26, the Colombo correspondent of the Beijing's official Xinhua News Agency.

The Chinese embassy was unavailable for comment Saturday.

It is the first deportation order against a journalist by the government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga which came to power in 1994 promising greater press freedom.

Several foreign correspondents were expelled from Colombo by previous governments which have been severely criticised by international rights organisations for curtailing media freedom.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "مكتبة جامعة القاهرة"



## Schroeder favourite to win German poll

BONN (R) — Gerhard Schröder appeared confident Saturday of using his north German regional power base as a springboard to challenge Chancellor Helmut Kohl for the reins of Western Europe's most populous country.

Pollsters predicted Mr. Schröder would be returned to power as premier of the state of lower Saxony in Sunday's election and would beat his party leader, Oskar Lafontaine, for the opposition Social Democrats' (SPD) nomination to run against Mr. Kohl.

"I feel extraordinarily well after the campaign," said Mr. Schröder, the 53-year-old rising star of German politics.

"The opinion polls are good. But above all the number of people turning out at rallies is good. Much better than last time," Mr. Schröder told Cologne's Koelner Stadt Anzeiger newspaper in an interview published Saturday.

"But we can't be so sure before an election," he added, referring to surveys showing Mr. Kohl's Christian Democrats (CDU) narrowing his lead.

"Voter intentions are not ballots, that's why the tension will remain right up to the first reliable exit poll projections."

Some pollsters have questioned whether Mr. Schröder will keep his one-seat majority in the state legislature in Hannover, and suggested he could be forced into an alliance with the ecologist Greens.

But when polls close at 6 p.m. (1700 GMT) Sunday, all eyes will be on the percentage of the vote he has gathered.

The premier, who invites comparison with U.S. President Bill Clinton and British leader Tony Blair, has turned the election into a primary for the SPD chancellorship nomination.

If he drops more than two points below the 44.3 per cent he won in 1994, Mr. Schröder has said he will not challenge Mr. Lafontaine for the ticket.

The party, out of power for 16 years after fielding a string of lacklustre candi-

dates, will decide Monday who will lead its charge against Mr. Kohl in Sept. 27 general elections.

Mr. Schröder is the clear favourite among voters but Mr. Lafontaine controls the party.

"Winning is fine, but people who can't maintain their share of the vote have a problem," said Bremen Mayor Henning Scherf, one of the 45-member SPD national committee that will choose the candidate.

"If Gerhard Schröder increases his share then he too will be a good candidate," Mr. Scherf told the N-TV news network.

Mr. Kohl, the West's longest-serving leader, would prefer to face Mr. Lafontaine, seen as a weaker candidate who he beat in 1990 elections.

The 67-year-old chancellor has made an unprecedented 11 campaign appearances in lower Saxony to support the local CDU candidate Christian Wulff in the hope of damaging Mr. Schröder.

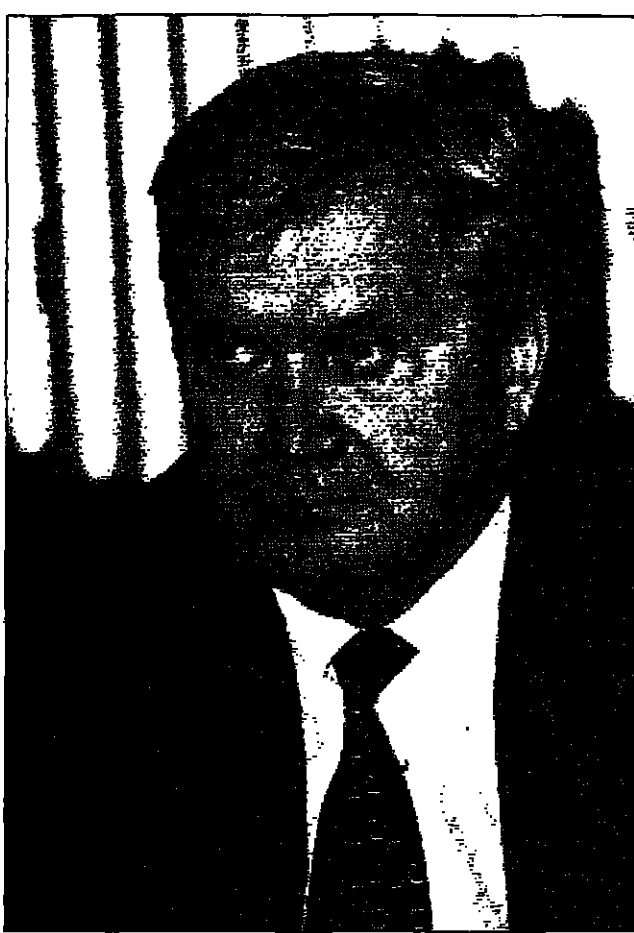
Mr. Kohl has slumped in popularity because of his inability to tackle mounting welfare and social problems, and unprecedented post-war unemployment of five million.

A poor CDU showing in lower Saxony could revive calls for the CDU to dump Mr. Kohl, who is going for a record fifth term.

Mr. Kohl's place in history as the architect of Germany's 1990 reunification is no longer a vote winner. And his latest achievement, the securing of a single European currency, is viewed as a failure by Germans fearful of abandoning the security blanket of the deutschmark.

"We have a candidate for chancellor," said Michael Glos, national parliamentary leader of the Christian Social Union, the CDU's sister party in Bavaria.

"We don't need a discussion about another one," he told Berlin's Inforadio Saturday, in an attempt to quash speculation that Mr. Kohl might hand over to his anointed successor, the wheelchair-bound CDU parliamentary leader Wolfgang Schäuble.



Russian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of relations with former Soviet republics Valery Serov listens during a news conference in this Aug. 15, 1996, file photo (Reuters photo)

## Yeltsin sacks 3 ministers, reformers stay

MOSCOW (R) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who has pledged a government reshuffle, sacked three ministers Saturday but all key reformers remained in their posts.

The Kremlin press service said Mr. Yeltsin had dismissed Valery Serov, deputy prime minister in charge of relations with former Soviet republics, Transport Minister Nikolai Tsakh and Education Minister Vladimir Kinelov.

All three were "relieved of their posts due to transfer to another job." Their new posts were not immediately known.

A Kremlin spokesman, asked whether more personnel changes were expected, said: "I do not know."

Mr. Serov became minister in charge of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in 1995 and was promoted to the rank of deputy prime minister for next year.

His departure was widely expected after CIS leaders criticised Mr. Yeltsin sharply at their latest summit late last year for doing little to turn the loose alliance of 12 states into a workable body.

Mr. Yeltsin has said the criticism was justified and promised to make the CIS one of his priorities in 1998.

Tsakh headed one of Russia's three main national monopolies, an immense network of railways, which the government has tried to modify in accordance with free market realities.

Gas and electricity are the other major monopolies.

The level of education in Russia, once the pride of the Communist superpower, has been deteriorating since the collapse of the

Soviet Union in 1991.

Ministers have been on tenterhooks for weeks amid increasing signs of a government reshuffle, though Mr. Yeltsin has ruled out dropping key figures like young reformers Boris Nemtsov and Anatoly Chubais from his team.

Mr. Chubais and Mr. Nemtsov joined Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin's cabinet after the last big reshuffle in March 1997 with a brief to accelerate market reforms.

In a redistribution of portfolios last November after a scandal that damaged Mr. Chubais, Mr. Yeltsin weakened the hand of the liberals who had dominated the cabinet since March.

The biggest gainer then was Mr. Chernomyrdin, whose more cautious approach to reform and long career in the gas industry has assured him a loyal following in big business.

The uncertainty increased Thursday when Mr. Yeltsin attended an expanded government meeting to review the cabinet's patchy 1997 record and his plans for this year.

He opened the meeting by saying three ministers may lose their posts by the end of the session and then unexpectedly walked out without comment.

Russian markets reacted nervously but Mr. Yeltsin, 67 and with a record of health problems including a major heart operation in 1996, appeared at an official function later in the day.

He looked well and the Kremlin insisted his departure from the cabinet meeting was scheduled.

## Former actress husband Tommy Lee out on bail

MALIBU, California (AFP) — Drummer Tommy Lee was set free on bail after pleading not guilty to charges of beating his wife, former "Baywatch" star Pamela Anderson, court sources here said.

Mr. Lee was released late Friday, soon after Municipal Court Judge Lawrence Mira cut his \$1 million bail in half. Judge Mira restricted Mr. Lee's access to his wife and their two children — one 20 months old, the other seven weeks old — until after a preliminary hearing on the case set for March 13.

Mr. Lee, drummer with the rock band Motley Crue, was arrested late Tuesday in the couple's residence here after neighbours called the police.

When the officers arrived at the house the actress said that they had an argument and that Mr. Lee had physi-

cally assaulted her, according to Angie Prewitt, spokesperson for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department.

Deputies noticed blood from a minor hand injury and saw that she had a broken fingernail. They also saw redness on the lower back of the 30-year-old actress who declined medical treatment.

Thursday the buxom former star of the popular "Baywatch" television series Thursday filed for divorce from Mr. Lee.

In her court petition, she asked for legal custody of their two young children, a protective order keeping him away from her and the children, and her old name back — Pamela Denise Anderson.

The drummer is currently on 24-month probation for a prior battery case.

## North Korea disappointed in Kim Dae-Jung's unification policy

SEOUL (AFP) — North Korea said Saturday it was disappointed with new South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung's unification policies and said it saw little hope for a change in North-South relations.

"It has disappointed the nation that he failed to clearly show a willingness to pursue a policy quite different from his predecessor's for unification," the official ruling Workers' Party newspaper Rodong Sinmun said in an editorial carried by the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

"We hope to have no impressions that there is no change in inter-Korean relations and the reunification issue though there was another change of regime in South Korea," it said.

The editorial was the

North's first reaction to Mr. Kim's proposals for easing tensions between the two hostile Koreas. Observers here noted that it did not mention Kim Dae-Jung by name, referring to him only as "the new South Korean ruler."

In addition, the commentators said, rather than reject or criticise Mr. Kim's proposals, including an exchange of presidential envoys and stepping up North-South contacts, it had said that they did not go far enough.

"Inter-Korean exchange and cooperation are good and dialogue and negotiations are also desirable. But what is more important is to have a correct view of the past and draw a proper lesson from it," it said.

"The North and South Korea should reject depen-

dence on outsiders and foreign interference, maintain the juche character and national character and pursue independence. And they should not antagonise each other but seek reconciliation and unity," the editorial said.

"A good beginning is important in everything ... to our regret however, he showed no response to the patriotic proposal and just called of the joint meeting of our political parties and organisations for the improvement of inter-Korean relations," it said.

North Korea last week sent 70 copies of a call for talks with social and political groups, including Kim Dae-Jung in his capacity not as head of state but as a party leader, through the Red Cross urging talks on unification.

In a separate dispatch

Saturday, KCNA quoted Rodong Sinmun as saying a "good atmosphere" must be created if North-South talks are to take place.

"In order to achieve a peaceful reunification of the country through dialogue and negotiations, conditions and climate should be created and proper efforts made for them," the newspaper said.

"If a dialogue between the North and the South is to be substantially conducive to national reunification a good atmosphere should be provided. It is important first to stop all acts opposing or hurting the dialogue partner."

The commentary went on to warn that it would be a "waste of time" to come to the negotiation table "under public pressure while seeking unification by military force."

## Bitterly divided Hindu, Muslim voters defy the bombers

COIMBATORE, India (AFP) — The Indian textile city of Coimbatore, better known in recent weeks for serial bombings and simmering religious tension, saw thousands of citizens flock to vote Saturday, spurred on by anger and resentment.

Hindu and Muslim voters, bitterly divided over who caused the bombings which left 58 dead and led to riots and mass arrests, were queuing at polling stations before voting began at 7:00 a.m. (0130 GMT).

Queues were still in evidence in some districts of the southern city just before the close, 10 hours later.

An unprecedented show of police and paramilitary security — most booths were surrounded by a dozen Rapid Action Force officers armed with guns and policemen with batons — failed to deter them.

There are 9,000 police on duty in Coimbatore, which is

unheard off — perhaps that instilled confidence and got the voters out," said K. Baskar, a police officer on poll duty.

For the city's Muslims, however, the driving force was anger.

Muslims, making up about 10 per cent of the city's population of 1.2 million people, feel they have been made the scapegoats for the Feb. 14 bombings.

More than a dozen explosions went off just before the start of the elections near a rally staged by the rightwing Hindu nationalists, who hope to come to power after the polls.

The nationalists, accused by rivals of sectarianism, had opened their election campaign with a call for Muslims, some 125 million of the country's 960 million total population, to abandon their suspicions and vote for them.

No one claimed responsibility for the Coimbatore bombings. But the attacks, blamed on

Islamic extremists, led to a police crackdown on the Muslim community as well as more than 700 arrests across Tamil Nadu.

Many Muslims fled Coimbatore, fearing a sectarian backlash as radical Hindus stoked simmering tensions by calling for tough measures to quell Muslim militancy.

Mohammad Ibrahim, a transport contractor, said he would vote for the DMK, the ruling regional party being challenged by the Hindu nationalist BJP.

He blamed the DMK for police heavy-handedness but argued: "How can I vote for BJP after their anti-Muslim stand? Muslim voters were already alienated and have been for some time, not just now."

Mohammad Yousuf, a trader voting in the city's Fort area, said many Muslims were still in detention while others had decided to stay away from the city during polling.

His point was underlined by dozens of boarded-up houses in the district.

But he added: "We have brought out our women to vote — they will more than compensate."

Queues of women, most of them veiled, were in evidence throughout Muslim areas, where officials said the turnout was higher than in other districts.

In central Coimbatore, however, near one of the blast sites, Hindus were also out in force.

They dismissed speculation the bombings could have been a secret plot by Hindu radicals to spark anti-Muslim hostility.

Sanjeev Kumar, accompanied by his sister Nirmala, blamed Muslim extremists, adding: "Even our neighbours who have never voted before are out this time. We are here to express anger against the ruling government for its lack of action — we are voting BJP."

## Cambodian strongman silent on ceasefire as rival armies respect truce

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian strongman Hun Sen was silent Saturday about a ceasefire between government troops and resistance forces as the first hours of the truce passed peacefully at battlefields along the Thai border.

Speaking in a confident and jovial tone to villagers in southern Kampong province, the powerful second prime minister made no mention of the ceasefire declared Friday, instead launching a populist attack on local officials.

"I don't understand, we used to give people money to develop the land but why now are the authorities seizing land from the people?" he said, referring to a dispute in which villagers' land was appropriated for a big developer.

"As long as I am still prime minister or am still alive and not prime minister I will stand strongly with the people on this issue... I stand with the Cambodian people."

In Phnom Penh, Cambodian military sources said they had received no reports of violations in the ceasefire which has ended months of factional fighting, at least for the moment.

A Thai military official in Surin province, just across the border from the besieged military headquarters of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh, echoed those comments.

"There have been no major skirmishes for about three weeks and, since the ceasefire became effective, the area has been quiet," Colonel Rongporn Rojanasaroj of the

Suranari Task Force told AFP.

"But we have to wait and see if the ceasefire holds, if there is any attempt by the two sides to bring in reinforcements including troops and weapons," he said, adding that there had been no withdrawal of Phnom Penh's troops.

"Before the ceasefire came into force, both sides were still deadlocked in their fight over O Smach and it was unclear which would prevail. But there has been no fighting at all for over 48 hours," he said.

The rival armies have been battling in Cambodia's north since last July when Prince Ranariddh was ousted following street battles in Phnom Penh between his troops and forces loyal to Hun Sen.

The prince's troops, believed to number in the hundreds, have been based at their stronghold of O Smach on the Thai border since August but have since spread to occupy remote positions along the border further south and west.

According to Phnom Penh, the prince's troops are being supported by outlawed Khmer Rouge guerrillas based at Anlong Veng east of O Smach.

The prince, who has flip-flopped between admitting Khmer Rouge support and denying it, is to go on trial in absentia on March 17 for colluding with the guerrillas.

There was no indication of whether the Khmer Rouge, who were pointedly omitted from the ceasefire declaration and whom the prince must renounce as a condition of the government offer, would support the end to hostilities.

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Editorial and advertising offices:  
 Jordan Press Foundation,  
 University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.  
 Telephones: 5684311, 5699634, 5667171, 5603585  
 Facsimile: 5696183  
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## Ruling breaks new ground

THE RECENT decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to exercise jurisdiction over the Lockerbie affair is a landmark in the application of international law. But what is most striking about it is the fact that it makes the Security Council's resolutions subject to judicial review for the first time. Hitherto, the Security Council had acted as if free from any judicial accountability, including by the World Court.

The legal and political implications of this ruling include denying the Security Council a free hand to do as it pleases in dealing with conflicts and disputes. The repercussions would certainly affect not only Libya, which is being subjected to grueling sanctions for refusing to comply with a council resolution (calling on the Libyans to hand over two nationals suspected of blowing up a Pan Am jet over in Scotland in 1988 for trial in Scotland or the U.S.), but also Cuba, Iraq and Sudan. Should Havana, Baghdad and Khartoum decide to take their plight to the World Court in a bid to revoke the sanctions applied against them and the court accepts to exercise jurisdiction over their situations, then the international community would face a new ball game altogether in crisis resolution. The exercise of jurisdiction over the Libya case has already opened a Pandora's box, leaving the council to meet new challenges hitherto unexplored successfully.

In its latest ruling, ICJ appears to have rested on the 1971 Montreal Civil Aviation Convention which does not obligate countries whose nationals are accused of or implicated in violating air safety to surrender them to stand trial in foreign countries. Libya has always argued that it is treaty obligated to have the two nationals tried on its own soil. Even though the ICJ verdict does not go into the merits of the Lockerbie dispute, it nevertheless raises questions as to the legitimacy of the sanctions imposed against Libya.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Sultan Al Hattab said the latest Mossad espionage scandal discovered in Switzerland further exposes Israel as a country bent on terrorism and disregards international law. Israel's record in espionage activities even in the U.S., its closest ally, is extensive and its violations of other countries' sovereignty continue unrestricted in various parts of the world, charged the writer. The worst record though is manifested in the Jewish state's continued occupation of Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese territories and its repressive acts against the Palestinians, he added. Switzerland is a friend of Israel, but this friendship has obviously not deterred the Israeli Mossad from committing an act of espionage against another country on Swiss soil, according to Hattab who added the failure of the Mossad activities in Switzerland and Jordan has helped expose the Jewish state's illegal acts worldwide. He demanded that countries like Jordan, Egypt and others whose territories were exposed to Mossad activities should lodge a complaint with the U.N. demanding that Israel pay compensation for the consequences of its actions and be condemned for its continual violations of international law.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said the people in the Arab Gulf states are demonstrating increased hatred towards the U.S. which they see as a colonial power intent on looting Arab oil wealth. The Gulf states view the U.S. as a power that has been blackmailing them into believing that Iraq is the great bully that should be confronted and so is finding a pretext for its continual presence in the Gulf region, said the writer. Furthermore the Gulf states have started to realise the consequences of Washington's double standard policies in trying to find any pretext to launch war on Iraq and at the same time not only condoning but also helping the Jewish state to perpetuate its occupation of Arab lands and providing it with the means to do that, according to Qallab. The writer said the Arab Gulf states' stand with regard to the 1998 crisis was in total contrast to that manifested in 1990 as perhaps the Gulf leaders have realised over the past seven years the real intentions and the greed of the U.S. in their countries.

## Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

# Did economic austerity pay off?

UNDER THE economic adjustment programme, agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, the Jordanian population was subjected to a measure of austerity. The per capita share of private consumption in real terms declined each year since 1992. The question is whether these sacrifices paid off and if the pains were justified.

Let us put aside for a moment the social justice considerations, and acknowledge that a wide disparity in incomes and standards of living is a fact of life. Unavoidable under any system. For the sake of this article we shall take the society as a whole, i.e., on a macroeconomic level, and use the overall average as our parameter.

In this respect we find many contradictions. Commentators and analysts point out the excessive tendency to consume. They condemn the consumerism culture, yet at the same time they call for raising the standard of living, which, by definition means more consumption. They should make up their minds — do they want the people to consume less or to raise the standard of living of the population. They can't go on calling for the best of two worlds to please everybody. It is either or.

Another set of observers and commentators calls for au-

terity while complaining that the IMF adjustment programme is too harsh on the people — again a matter of contradiction and playing with words. We should ask ourselves whether we are in the short-term for austerity or prosperity.

Austerity in itself is unpopular, yet sometimes there is no sustainable alternative. Austerity today may be the only promise for prosperity tomorrow. Jordan applied austerity programmes during the last 10 years. These programmes were manifested in a tight monetary policy, more taxes, higher prices, removal of subsidies, and suppressing salaries and wages.

We have pushed on with this austerity policy for quite some time and gave it priority over raising the standard of living which is obviously desirable. Therefore it is only legitimate to ask questions such as: Have the austerity policy and the pain that goes with it paid off? What are the rewards? Do they justify the sacrifices? Is there a light at the end of the tunnel, or is it austerity forever?

As I see it, the austerity endured by Jordanians, and the suffering of the majority since 1989, was not in vain. The austerity paid off and gave positive results that lend themselves to measurement. Among these results are: The stability of the Jordan dinar exchange rate, the reduction of the

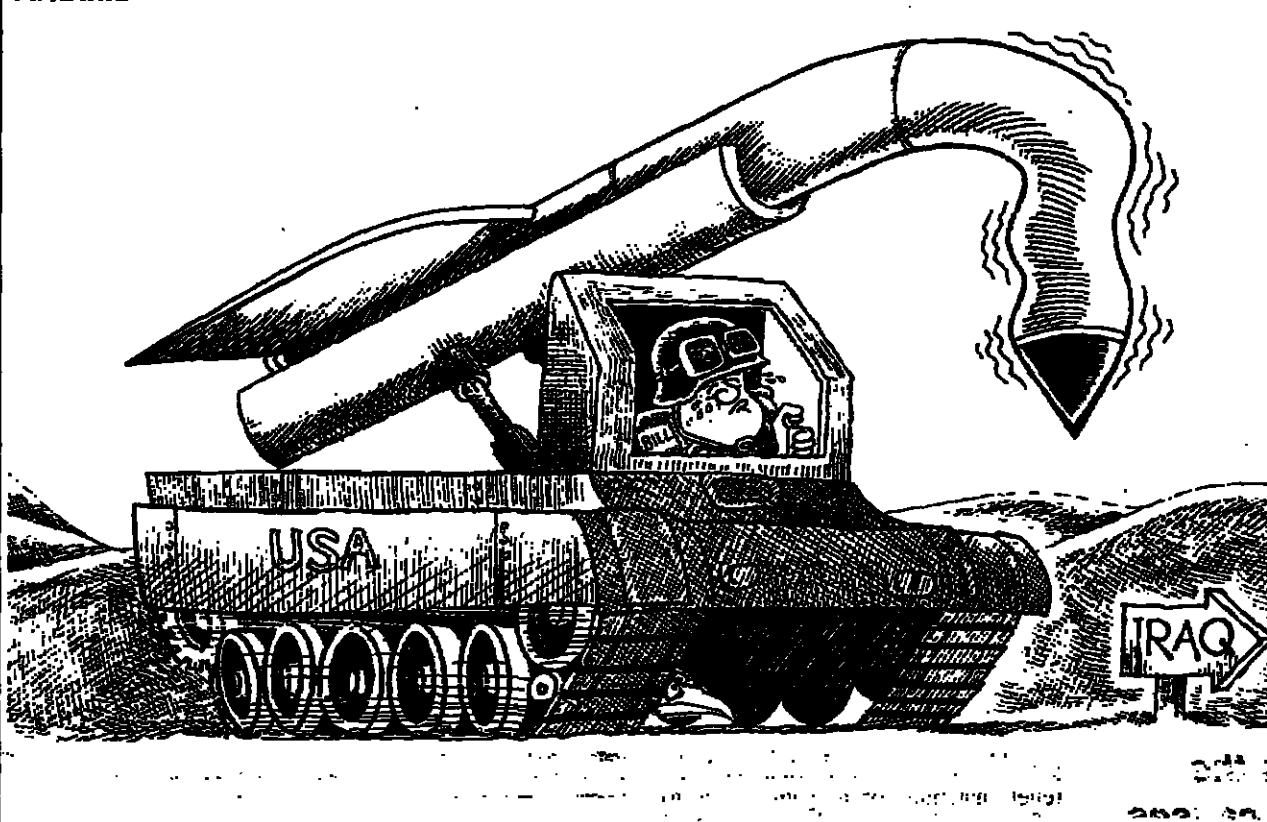
deficit in the central government budget, the reduction of overall indebtedness and the burden of debt service both in absolute figures and in relative terms, and the build up of comfortable reserve of foreign exchange with the Central Bank which is unprecedented in its size, thus inspiring confidence.

Our budget used to be the weak point in the country's economic and political structure. It is now balanced and depends mainly on taxpayers' money, not the largesse of donor countries. Foreign currencies are accumulating with the Central Bank so that the JD became a hard currency pegged to the strong dollar. All these achievements were no coincidence, they were earned the hard way and paid for by the sweat of the Jordanian people tightening their belts for almost 10 years.

At one time, national independence was achievable through struggle against foreign colonialists, which means sacrifices in lives. Today national independence is served by austerity, hard work, and some sacrifices in consumption, reducing waste, enhancing efficiency and building a sustainable economy free of foreign assistance.

The sacrifices of the Jordanians were extensive, but the prize is worth it.

M. KAHIL



## Iraq: The score

By Gwynne Dyer

EVERYBODY HAS won, so they shall all have prizes.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in his first major crisis since taking over the job, has delivered the goods. He may look too tame and urbane to beard the 'Beast of Baghdad' in his lair, but the deal he has brought back to New York meets the key U.S. requirement of unlimited access to Saddam Hussein's palaces, with no time limit, for U.N. arms inspectors.

U.S. President Bill Clinton has managed, if only for a moment, to adopt a rather more 'presidential' posture than the one that now pops into everybody's imagination when his name comes up. He might have preferred the longer distraction that a bombing campaign against Iraq would have provided, but the military futility and huge diplomatic costs of that option made it unpopular even in the Pentagon and the State Department.

Even Russia claims a hand in the success, pointing out that it was Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov's call to Saddam Hussein on Feb. 21 warning that there was no support even in Moscow for time limits on the inspection process, that pushed Saddam into making a deal.

But the big winner is certainly Saddam Hussein himself. He is still only 60, and he expects to be in power long after all the other players in the drama have retired from office. He plays a long game, and he has just improved his long-term position immensely.

The chemical and biological 'weapons of mass destruction' that we have

been hearing so much about recently were never more than minor pieces in a much bigger game. The Iraqi leader has used poison gas against his own people and against Iraqis, but he didn't use them against his Arab neighbours, Israel, or their Western backers even at the time of the Gulf War, when he still had thousands of chemical and bacteriological warheads.

Saddam Hussein refrained because the retaliation would have been huge: it was the one act that would have united them all in a determination to bring him down. So he was hardly likely to use those weapons now, even if he has hidden a few away — and the U.S. and Israeli governments knew that very well, despite all the recent public-relations nonsense about gas masks and anthrax vaccinations.

If chemical weapons were really the issue, then Washington would be gearing up for a massive strike against Libya (where it claims that Muammar Qadhafi has a huge poison gas facility under construction), not against Iraq. For both sides, Iraq's alleged weapons are just markers in a game that is really about sanctions.

For seven years now, the United States has used the hunt for these weapons as an excuse to maintain crippling economic sanctions against Baghdad. Sanctions, in turn, are a key part of the American policy of 'dual containment' against Iraq and Iran, the two countries it fears might overthrow what is currently (for the U.S.) an almost ideal status quo in the Middle East.

Iran has 60 million people, a lot of oil, and a (fading) Islamic revolutionary fervour, but its ability to

spread its anti-Western ideas on the other side of the Gulf was always greatly constrained by the fact that Iraqians are not Arabs. Iraq has only 22 million people, but it is Arab — and it is the only Arab state to have both oil and water, which makes it potentially the greatest economic and military power in the Arab World.

Iraq was well on its way to attaining that position before Saddam Hussein blundered by invading Kuwait in 1990, and incurred the economic sanctions that have now reduced his country to penury. And though the Iraqi leader has his substantial faults, he does come from a political tradition, that of the Ba'ath Party, that is militantly revolutionary, anti-Western, anti-feudal (and, at least in its original incarnation, anti-religious as well).

Even if he has not a single idealistic bone in his body, Saddam Hussein has always adhered to the Ba'athist ideology because it maximises the potential importance of his own and his country's role in the world. Making Iraq the greatest Arab power, overthrowing the 'treacherous' pro-Western monarchies of countries like Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and leading a great Arab coalition in a final assault on Israel was and is his long-term strategy.

He may well think that it is now back on track, for what Kofi Annan (and probably Washington) will have to accept in return for unrestricted weapons inspections is an end to economic sanctions against Iraq within the next year or two. The rest of the world, and particularly the rest of the Arab World, is simply no longer willing to use military

force to maintain the sanctions.

Saddam Hussein is no diplomatic genius. He understood the obvious fact that the inspections were a way of justifying continued sanctions, so he has tried on several occasions to force a negotiation by creating a crisis over access for inspectors. It didn't work in the past, because the coalition against him was still strong. It has worked now because the coalition has fallen apart.

It has fallen apart because the United States could not deliver on the promises it made to its Arab allies in 1990. Since the election of Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu's government in Israel, the Arab-Israeli peace process has ground to a complete halt. The hypocrisy of going to war over Iraq's defiance of U.N. disarmament resolutions, while Israel sits unchallenged on hundreds of (unadmitted) nuclear weapons and huge areas of Arab territory, is just too much for Arabs to swallow.

As a result, even those Arab regimes that have good reason to fear Saddam Hussein dare not support military action against him, for fear of the reaction of their own deeply disillusioned populations. Saddam Hussein threatens their survival in the long run, but American attacks on Iraq would threaten their survival in the short run.

Saddam Hussein will probably keep his word on weapons inspections this time, at least until sanctions are lifted. But they will be lifted, and that will probably mark the beginning of the end of American hegemony in the Middle East.

## LETTERS

### A step forward

To the editor:

THE 60-minute programme aired on Jordan Television Friday evening — about the Ma'an demonstrations — was in my opinion a step forward for a balanced and informative debate. Deputy Abdul Karim Dughmi and Editor of the Jordan Times George Hawatmeh were very eloquent and forceful in representing those who believe in the right of freedom of expression. Parliamentary and Legal Affairs Minister Dr. Khaled Zu'bi tried very hard to defend the government's position. Jordan Press Association President Seif Sharif's input was somewhat dull. But all in all I think that Messrs. Dughmi and Hawatmeh came out on top. The government's side was unconvincing as they stuck to worn-out arguments, namely security and infiltrators, and the technicalities of the law.

The most important points raised by the "pro-freedom of expression" panelists were:

1. That the government should not dictate to the people how and when to express their views. As Mr. Hawatmeh eloquently put it: Should we wait until all crises pass by before we allow people to exercise their right of free expression.
2. If there are some infiltrators who abuse such demonstrations, and assuming that the government knows who they are, then the government should deal with them specifically without cracking down on all demonstrators and banning all demonstrations.

Finally I believe that Mr. Badri (the moderator) could do a better job by remaining as neutral as possible and not taking sides (in this case the government's side).  
 Congratulations JTV.

Rami Safarini  
 Amman

### An American view

To the editor:

I PERSONALLY think that if Iraq gives unfettered access to the presidential sites it would alleviate a lot of tension!

Then talks of oil-for-food with the U.S. and Britain as an appeasement for complying with the U.N. demands would go a much longer way toward reclaiming Iraq's stake in world commerce than any thing else! After all the U.S.' real game is commerce not war! The biological weapons are just too dangerous to the ecology of the areas we are all in. Mr. Clinton should have this option on the table, and I would hope Saddam Hussein would accept the offer! Total sites inspection = more leverage on any bargaining table! Total compliance = fewer restrictions in the long run on commerce! But no nuclear, biological and chemical weapons will be tolerated!!! Saddam Hussein might have no choice but to listen to the dialogue of peace in your region.

Of course these are my humble thoughts — your's might differ. This is what makes our world unique.  
 May Allah grant all wisdom toward peace!

Nick Kearney  
 USA

### Diligent screening a must

To the editor:

ON FEB. 9, 1998, two new shocking cases of child abuse were reported by the Jordan Times, committed by two foster mothers employed by the Hussein Social Institution, operating under the umbrella of the Ministry of Social Development. The children's crime was bed-wetting, and the price they paid was burnt genitalia.

One has to question such recurrent abusive and distressing stories and certainly ask, What background do these "unqualified" foster mothers come from? What psychological status were they in when they cruelly committed such abusive physical acts against innocent children?

As any mother, I am saddened and distressed to hear once again of such stories, which only prove the incompetence of our social institutions, which are somehow operating blindly.

Abusive and frustrated staff of such vital social institutions are not only inflicting physical injuries on our children, but are most definitely creating new generations of similar abusers.

Bed-wetting is not corrected by physical punishment. The condition is treated medically or psychologically.

Our beloved Jordan is a developing country, but the route is bumpy and filled with new challenges and exposures. The child/domestic violence arena is simply darkening the horizon of our society's future. It is obvious, however, that the Ministry of Social Development needs as many helping hands as possible, and close cooperation with some professional institutions whose purpose is to tackle such problems is vital. Professional help is needed, and qualified people in such fields are to be employed. Volunteers and trainees must be strictly screened.

How much more injury must our underprivileged children bear?  
 "Nothing is free in his world, the question is merely who pays the price? And who bears the costs?" — from "The True Path" by Mark Hanna.

Lina Moushesh Owes  
 Amman



# 'Humanitarian action must become part of comprehensive international crisis management system'

By Sadako Ogata

AMONG THE great expectations raised by the end of the cold war in the early part of this decade was that the world started looking forward to an era without humanitarian tragedies. Since 1991, I have served as the first United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the post-cold war period. From this privileged vantage point, and contrary to most predictions, I have seen millions of innocent people become victims of some of the worst humanitarian catastrophes in history. I have also seen one of the most crucial humanitarian issues — forced human displacement — grow into a much more vast and complex problem than in previous years. As the end of the decade approaches, and as many of us struggle to find solutions to the refugee problem, it is worth — I believe — examining some of its current aspects, seen from the point of view of my office.

Although UNHCR was a child in the cold war, it operated on the principles of impartiality and neutrality. Before the political changes in the former communist bloc, refugee protection was frequently a political and humanitarian corollary of the ideological divide between the two superpowers. Refugees fleeing communist regimes, proxy wars and decolonisation struggles were granted asylum in the West. Voluntary repatriation was only rarely an option. UNHCR operated generally in countries of asylum, seldom in countries of origin.

In response to the changing nature and increasing complexity of conflicts after the end of the "bipolar" world order, the role of UNHCR has expanded and diversified. Since 1991, three major humanitarian crises have fundamentally altered the response of states and of humanitarian agencies to massive forced population movements. The rapidity and scale of recent displacements has been unprecedented. After the Gulf war, more than two million Iraqi Kurds fled in the course of just 10 days into the mountains along the Iraq-Turkey and Iran-Iraq borders, and just six weeks later they began to return. When war broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina in spring 1992, nearly half the population of that country of four million people was displaced. Shortly thereafter, in the summer of 1994, in what has been described as an exodus "of biblical proportions," more than one million persons crossed the border from Rwanda to what was then Zaire, in just 2-3 days. And then in November 1996, 600,000 Rwandese out of the same group returned from Zaire in the course of three to four days. In these and in numerous other crises, UNHCR and our partners have managed to respond and to provide life-saving assistance, thanks to our greatly improved emergency response capacity.

In many respects, the 1991 refugee crisis in northern Iraq was watershed. We focused our efforts on an early return of the refugees, in safety and dignity, to their homes in northern Iraq. Recognising the unstable situation and the need to organise an immense relief operation, the Security Council authorised a multinational force to provide a security umbrella and to support the humanitarian efforts in northern Iraq. It was the first time that a refugee foe was viewed by the Security Council as a potential threat to regional peace and security

necessitating action under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter. Security Council resolution 688 also marked an increased willingness of the international community to become involved in conflict situations for humanitarian reasons.

## Population displacement

These three examples make it clear that humanitarian agencies are increasingly forced to operate in a highly complex environment, frequently in the midst of ongoing conflict. Population displacement today is not only the by-product but also sometimes the objective of the conflict. And it is clearer than ever that large-scale refugee movements can be a threat to regional security.

We have recently seen population displacement occurring as a consequence of what I would call group conflicts — with the vanquished group fleeing the victorious group. In such situations, those fleeing are a complex — often explosive — mix of the defeated government army or militia, whose goal is to return to power, mixed with innocent civilians — mostly women and children. In the Great Lakes region of Africa, refugees were literally held hostage by the former army and militia of Rwanda — who used refugee camps as poles of attraction for aid and staging points for military attacks.

**For far too long humanitarian action on behalf of refugees has been viewed simply as charity: as a way of easing the world's bad conscience about human suffering, without engagement to address the underlying causes and without a plan for their resolution.**

In addition, in the post cold war conflicts we have seen that warring parties often scorn the principles of impartiality and neutrality under which humanitarian agencies try to operate. Nor is the safety of humanitarian personnel guaranteed. Since 1992, 36 UNHCR staff have been killed in security incidents worldwide. A total 23 Red Cross staff have lost their lives in the Great Lakes region alone since 1996. The United Nations and the Red Cross and Red Crescent symbols no longer provide the protection they once did.

## A way forward

Humanitarian action must become part of a comprehensive international crisis management system. The political, security, economic, social, human rights and humanitarian aspects of conflicts must be addressed.

First, we need a much stronger emphasis on conflict prevention and conflict resolution. I am, in this connection, encouraged by the increasing recognition of the linkage between state security and human security. Already growing awareness exists at the political level of the causes and consequences of massive refugee movements. Regional organisations also seek to define their role in the changing world order, and they are focusing more and more on conflict prevention and resolution. In this respect, I wonder whether our existing conflict resolution models are adequate to meet today's complex challenges.

Certainly it is a good sign that humanitarian problems are now frequently the subject of discussion at the Security Council. The fact that humanitarian crises may also affect regional peace and stability is now openly admitted. But there is also an increasing understanding that there can be no state security without human security. I hope the next step will be a translation of this recognition into more concrete action on behalf of victims of violence.

Such action will often have to be in the form of security support. We cannot continue to rely on humanitarian actors to operate alone in the midst of highly politicised or militarised conflicts. Of course, it should not be a matter of all or nothing — in other words, a massive military operation with overwhelming force or no action at all. There should be a ladder of options — from military operations to peacekeeping operations, to civilian police (armed or unarmed), to U.N. guards, or the kind of civilian arrangements we have been involved in ourselves. What we need is a rapidly deployable arrangement that can intervene in order to create a safe environment for humanitarian action.

In this connection, I wish to strengthen our relationship with the military. Humanitarian agencies are sometimes reluctant to cooperate closely with military forces, but positive experiences, as in the former Yugoslavia, have contributed towards a better understanding of respective roles. At the same time, I am frustrated by the lack of response to our appeals for military or police support to protect humanitarian staff and relief materials, or to gain access to refugees and evacuate them to safety. I look forward to the efforts by a number of countries to set up a Multinational Stand-by High Readiness Brigade, as announced by the U.N. secretary-general.

At the humanitarian level, significant progress has been made towards an effective and rapid emergency response capacity. We must continue to enhance our effectiveness by further strengthening links with our NGO partners.

Despite the hurdles, post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina is an example of the strategic relationship among political, military and humanitarian action leading to a solution of refugee problems and working towards sustainable peace and security. The refugee crisis in the Great Lakes of Africa, on the other hand, is an example of the failure of the international community to establish such an integrated approach.

At the economic, social and development level, I believe humanitarian efforts must be part of peace-building endeavours in the transition from war to peace. On a much larger scale there is a need for the physical and social rehabilitation of societies, as demonstrated in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In



Refugees living in a disused railway freight wagon in Azerbaijan (photo Panos Pictures)

an ideal arrangement, humanitarian and development actors should work out a common operational framework from the outset of a crisis. Due attention should also be given to policies which contribute towards reconciling communities, rather than prolonging the status quo or giving rise to new tensions.

An integrated approach must address the respect for human rights. Indeed, human security in its widest sense requires a full respect for the totality of human rights — be they political, economic or social. The violation of human rights contributes significantly to conflicts and displacement. The restoration of human rights is essential to the return of refugees to a life in safety and dignity in their own country.

## More than half of the world's refugees are Muslims

I would like to add a few words about our initiatives concerning refugee problems and population displacements in this region. Since more than half of the world's 23 million refugees and dis-

placed persons are Muslims, UNHCR launched a consultation process, known as CASWAME, for Central and South-west Asia and the Middle East, in March 1997. A wide-scale review of the complex problems of forced displacement in these areas was the focus of the first discussions held in Amman. The next round is scheduled to take place in Ashkhabad in March 1998, in an attempt to advance the process of finding solutions for the millions of refugees and displaced people in the region.

In line with UNHCR's goals, we have sought the cooperation of our partners in the CASWAME process. We actively participated in the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Tehran Dec. 9-11 1997; and we have been engaged in an active advocacy campaign in the Gulf since October 1997. This campaign aims at creating a better understanding of our work and at helping partners to identify how they can support the refugee cause.

For far too long humanitarian action on behalf of refugees has been viewed simply as charity: as a way of easing the

world's bad conscience about human suffering, without engagement to address the underlying causes and without a plan for their resolution. The first League of Nations for Refugees Fridtjof Nansen argued that alleviating human suffering is indeed a matter of state, not simply one of charity.

Too often, in recent years, humanitarian action has been like a bridge over troubled waters. My hope is that we are moving towards an international crisis management system where humanitarian action will be the bridge that links the necessary political and security actors on one hand and the indispensable economic and social activities on the other hand. I believe we have learned a great deal from the crises since the end of the cold war. The challenge now is to apply the lessons learned to the construction of a strategy for addressing the conflicts of the next century.

The writer is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

# Children's fears as embargo victims

By Felicity Arbuthnot

THE HORRORS of the effect of the embargo on Iraq are such that at the height of the recent tensions, Fatima, aged nine, told visiting aid workers, "I would rather die of the bombing than of sanctions," recounts Kathy Kelly of the Chicago-based Voices in the Wilderness who have just returned from their 10th mission to Iraq since early 1996.

"We have been amazed by the emphasis ordinary people have placed on sanctions rather than the imminent fear of bombing. The Iraqi people we met, though they fear the threat to themselves and their families, have lived under such deprivation since the implementation of the embargo, on a day-to-day basis, that it seemed to us that only for the very young did the terror of the bombs exceed the trauma of sanctions," mused Kelly.

The "Voices" delegation

included Chuck Quilty and Rick McDowell, both former social workers, who have abandoned their careers in order to provide medical aid for Iraq and Martin Thomas and Milan Rai from the United Kingdom. Thomas represented Glasgow Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Rai and others have held a vigil outside the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office every Monday night for seven years calling for the lifting of the embargo on Iraq. A quantity of medicine brought from the U.K., for Iraq was confiscated at London airport by British customs.

"Voices" delivered \$110,000 of aid throughout Iraq and returned with haunting images. "A little girl of four asked me 'Are they going to kill me?'," recounts Quilty, "but she was more worried about her two-year-old sister — 'Are they going to kill my little sister?'"

The two lived in a centre

for those internally displaced within Iraq since the Gulf war. Built after the Iraq/Iran war, the huge building, planned as a state of the art centre, built with petrodollars, had not been completed by the outbreak of the 1991 hostilities. "There are about five thousand children in the building. An average family of 10 live in a room three metres by three metres — many families have eight children," says Quilty. "There are great balconies — but the railings have never been added, so children clamber out onto them and fall off, injuring themselves terribly — or frequently are killed. I saw a woman lowering a bucket from one, to a tap three floors below, leaning over to check if it was full then pulling it up again."

Due to the vetoing of spare parts for water treatment by the U.N. Sanctions Committee, Basra is renowned for having the most lethal water in Iraq,

with water and raw sewage bubbling up in the streets, mixing and seeping back into fractured pipes. Water borne diseases are endemic — and due to lack of medicines, frequently terminal. "Children scamp through sewage seeping through the floors, in their little bare feet — there is no heating in winter and no air conditioning in summer," says Quilty.

At Basra's formerly famous teaching hospital, McDowell witnessed the queue at the pharmacy: "A 15-year-old boy, dying of cancer, was doubled over in agony, his father, standing beside him, mute, tears streaming down his face, powerless to help." Whilst all Iraq has suffered a five-fold increase in childhood cancers since the Gulf war, Basra has suffered a cancer explosion. "Outside, in the foyer, a father whose child had just died, lay collapsed and sobbing on the floor," said McDowell.

In Falujah (where a market

and those shopping in it was bombed during the Gulf war) "...any warehouse on the street could have been the hospital," Kelly told the Jordan Times, recounting how a doctor had told her:

"Yesterday I screamed at a nurse — I had told her to give our only ampule of medication for cardiac conditions to one particular heart patient — he had the best chance, so we would have to let the other two die." There were tears in his eyes... The nurse had injected the wrong patient. This, in formerly one of the finest teaching hospitals in the Middle East.

"The collapse of the entire infrastructure — what little is left — is imminent," says Kelly. Further: "Starvation is becoming routine." At the Al-Mansour Teaching Hospital in Baghdad she recounted "...a baby with nutritional marasmus, barely formed, emaciated beyond description, with the pixie face of an

old man. He haunts us all, the embargo's victim — probably by now added to the one and a quarter million children estimated to have died of embargo-related causes."

"Whilst the consultant paediatrician was showing us round a ward, he helped revive a child — then told us she would survive only to gasp her way through the last hours of her small life, since there was no oxygen or medication to sustain her survival."

"A mother was nursing her tiny, frail baby. He was one of twins. His sibling had died the week before, and his own life hung in the balance. Suddenly his mother thrust him into my arms, grabbed my notebook and wrote in Arabic: 'In memory of the day we were together, as sisters, not enemies, in a desperate effort to communicate her pain and her desire for normality. Then she clung to me and wept and wept,' said a

visibly distressed Kelly. Perhaps this is why Fatima, aged nine, who looks after her brothers and sisters, since her father was killed outright as a result of the embargo — by a car whose brakes failed through want of vetoed spare parts — does not care too much about bombs. Her mother works the markets to try and scrape a living to support her family. It is Fatima who would: "Rather die of bombing than of sanctions."

The writer is an Irish journalist specialising in social and environmental issues. She has written and broadcast widely on the catastrophic effects of the embargo on the people of Iraq, where she has travelled many times since the Gulf war. She is currently making a documentary on the health and environmental impact of the war. She contributed this article to the Jordan Times.





## Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

### Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources studying two offers to build refinery in Aqaba

THE MINISTRY of Energy and Mineral Resources is presently studying offers from two international consortiums to build a refinery at Aqaba at a cost of \$2 billion. The ministry will announce the name of the winner and will sign a memorandum of understanding in this regard in May. Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Mohammad Saleh Horani said in a lecture at Al Falah Club.

The minister revealed that the first consortium includes three U.S. companies whereas the second includes seven Arab (Kuwaiti), Japanese, European and U.S. companies. The refinery will be export-oriented and will not compete with the Jordan Petroleum Refinery in Zarqa, Mr. Horani stressed.

Mr. Horani also revealed in his lecture that the government has signed an agreement with the Dutch Shell company to prospect for oil from oil shales. He noted that according to studies, Shell expects to extract oil at a cost ranging between \$9 and \$11 per barrel if the oil is found in commercial quantities. The minister unveiled an agreement that was signed last week with a Russian firm to prospect for gas and oil in the Kingdom. The firm pledged to extract 350,000 tonnes of oil annually.

The minister indicated that more than JD600 million were invested over the past 20 years in energy and power generation as well as building energy networks. He called for wider promotion of natural resources in the Kingdom to encourage investments in this field. Furthermore, he urged adopting a "commercial thinking" noting that the ministry has set up a promotion and marketing department within its programme of restructuring the Natural Resources Authority.

Mr. Horani expected a six per cent annual increase on demand for oil and said he was in favour of floating oil prices in the country because they do not reflect the real cost. "However, the present situation requires controlling prices of oil derivatives and maintaining them at current levels," he added.

The minister went on to indicate that the negotiations with the Egyptian government on gas imports have reached an advanced stage that will be followed by transporting the gas from Aqaba to Amman. He concluded by saying that the Kingdom will connect its electricity grid with Egypt in May at a cost of \$250 million. "The connection with the Syrian electricity grid will take place within the coming 18 months," he said.

## Arab Bank: Major Information Systems Achievements ('96-'97)

ARAB BANK has always pioneered advanced technologies to better serve its customers. In 1970 Arab Bank was among the first banks in the area to introduce the computer, and now it has 21 Information Systems Centres around the world.

In recent years, the Bank has taken advantage of latest technologies and made use of the enormous developments in communications, hardware and software. During 1996 and 1997, more achievements were realised in information systems and automated self-services, which are summarised as follows:

### Self Services

1. The Bank expanded its Automated Teller service. The number of ATMs has exceeded 100 ATMs operating in 9 countries. Customers' utilisation of the ATM services has reached around 60 per cent of customers cash withdrawals. It is worth mentioning that Arab Bank was the first bank to introduce the ATM service in Jordan in 1985, also in Lebanon, Palestine and Yemen.

2. Phonebank service was enhanced to provide more services in Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Cyprus, Palestine and Yemen. The number of daily Phone-bank calls in Jordan exceeds 4500 calls and results in almost 5400 transactions. It is also worth mentioning that Arab Bank was the first bank to introduce Phonebank services to customers in Jordan in 1989 and in Egypt, Lebanon, Yemen and Palestine.

3. Arab Bank new worldwide electronic banking platform was implemented in UAE, Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain so far, and is planned for implementation at other Arab Bank branches

during 1998. This platform enabled the bank to connect to local switches in UAE, Qatar and Bahrain and to acquire Visa/Plus cards on its ATM networks in UAE and Jordan and soon in Qatar and Bahrain.

4. Visa Electron cards programme was launched as international debit cards for customers in the UAE (Jan. 1997) and will soon launch it in Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain.

5. Voice Mail service was introduced in most of Jordan branches. This facilitates customers communications with their branches.

### Systems

1. The Bank licensed Equation DBA software which enables the branches to provide new services. And the second software is Forward Rate/Interest Rates SWAPs (FRA/IRS) for its Paris and New York branches.

2. A new system was developed to handle credit facilities approvals electronically between the branches and the General Management. This system speeds the decision-making process and improves accuracy of information.

3. The Credit Facilities Systems were enhanced to provide the following new features:

- Inquiries on Credit Facilities Information (globally).  
- The "Financial Relation Report" which will be provided to corporate customers based on their request for the purpose of reconciling their annual and/or half annual balance sheets.

4. Automatic Cheques Clearing System in Jordan became live with the Central Bank system, in July 1997. The system processes inter-bank cheques (inward, outward, returned). It saves images of cheques and

archives them (Cheques archiving). Also, the system sorts cheques according to branch/account number which makes the process of verifying and archiving cheques much easier for the branches.

5. The Electronic Imaging System has been implemented in all Arab Bank branches. This system enables quick verification of customers' signatures and keeping electronic copies of accounts statements, advices and financial records readily at all times.

6. A preliminary study has been conducted by the Information Systems Division to implement a Global Treasury System. The study covered system feasibility and outline, and addressed possible solutions. Some of the systems functions are:

- Controlling and supervising all treasury limits and exposures.
- Managing the bank's Interest Rate Risk exposure on a global basis.
- Addressing the liquidity of the bank and its liability structure.

The system will connect the Bank's treasury rooms in Singapore, London, New York and Bahrain to a Global Treasury Database which will in its turn be connected to a Global Risk Management.

7. The Bank contracted Citydealer software which is a complete front office deal capture (for FX, Money Market, Off-Balance Sheet, Futures, Options and Securities) and trader support systems. Citydealer provides deal capture facilities, supports limits monitoring, provides a wide range of position keeping and cash flow management, risk management, "what if" Analysis and decision support tools.

The system interfaces to Reuters Dealing 2000 and to Backoffice System (Equation/3).

The system is currently implemented in Singapore and planned to be implemented in Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, Paris and Frankfurt during 1998.

8. After successful implementation of the Queue Management System in Jubeiha branch/Jordan, it was implemented, by end of 1997, in Marka, Abdali, Jabal Hussein, Wadi Seer and Wahdat branches in Jordan. This system aims at providing customers with faster and comfortable services.

### Communications

1. Arab Bank implemented SWIFT financial service across its branch network worldwide (implementation is planned in Palestine and Yemen during 1998). Various banking applications are interfaced with SWIFT. Linking to SWIFT network has enhanced speed, accuracy and security compared with the conventional telex system. This was further improved by utilising X.25 and PDN communications and migration from ST200 software to Alliance.

2. Arab Bank Data Network (ABDN) is in operation in Jordan, Austria, France, Singapore, Qatar, UAE, Australia, USA, Bahrain, Greece, Korea and Spain. The network provides global connections between the branches worldwide and can be utilised in Inter Centre Connections, Cross Boarders Transaction and Global Treasury. It is now utilised for on-line E-Mail and will be enhanced to carry other services.

3. Satellite communication is used to connect Arab Bank branches and ATMs in Palestine to the central computer in order to overcome ground communication difficulties.

4. After successful implementation of router technology (linking branches to I.S. Centre) in UAE and Cyprus, next in implementation is Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine and Qatar as they are currently in the process of installing the routers in preparation for implementation.

5. Arab Bank licensed advanced software amongst which are Back Office. This enables all branches to use electronic mail, financial analysis and word processing on personal computers, thus enhancing service performance and personnel productivity.

Using Multi-Media Technology to introduce the ISD & the Bank

1. Two Multimedia Films have been produced. The first film is about Arab Bank (in Arabic and English). The film provides information about various areas such as founding of the Bank, branch network, financial highlights, project financing, banking services and automated services. This film has been circulated to all branches for marketing purposes.

The second film is about Information Systems Division (in English) and it provides information on ISD organisation and activities.

### Internet

1. An Arab Bank Web-Site in English and Arabic was created on the Internet. The Web-Site address is: www.arabbank.com. This site includes various information about Arab Bank news, history, profile, branches services, electronic banking, Shoman Foundation and Ask Us.

### Other Information:

1. Arab Bank started planning for the reengineering of its services and business process (1st Sept., 1997), aiming at enhancing efficiency and competitiveness in a world of accelerating change. A team has been formed in Head Office headed by Mr. Eyad Shukairy/Head of ISD to formulate the project plan so that the project starts in the beginning of 1998 in coordination and cooperation with all our branches.

\* ISD was reorganised in the beginning of 1995, by adopting new management concepts by reducing management layers and adopting work teams.

\* Two meetings; one for the Heads of I.S. Centres in the Arab World and the other for the Heads of I.S. Centres in the International branches are held annually. The last meeting for the Arab World took place in Amman in June, 1997, and for the International branches took place in London in November 1996. Such meetings focus on I. S. centres requirements, difficulties and strategic directions. Speakers from major vendors, e.g. IBM and Midas - Kapiit, covered the latest developments which affect ISD strategic planning.

\* ISD staff in December, 1997 represented 6 per cent of the total Bank's staff, and ISD's expenses during 1997 constituted 9.7 per cent of the Bank's total operating expenses.

## REUTERS

### The Business of Information


Major Currencies & Cross Rates		Prices as at 28/02/98 19:43	
Currency	Rate	Unit	Rate
US Dollar	1.2145	1.0000	1.2145
DE Mark	0.8511	1.0000	0.8511
GB Sterling	1.6470	1.0000	1.6470
CH Franc	0.8820	125.00	110.20
JP Yen	0.0078	148.82	110.20
CA Dollar	0.7038	1.2500	1.1300
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0148	1.6304
NL Guilder	0.4887	88.45	0.2965
FR Franc	0.1643	0.2981	24.0930

Middle Eastern Currencies		Prices as at 28/02/98 19:43	
Currency	Rate	Unit	Rate
US Dollar	0.7090	3.7805	0.5370
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	0.2898	0.5317
Saudi Riyal	0.2866	0.1890	0.1005
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8808	0.8481
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1547	1.0301
Kuwait Dinar	3.2798	2.3284	1.2308
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0212
Lebanese/1000	0.85	8.4639	2.4837
Egyptian	0.2943	0.2087	1.1038

Energy		Mid-East Currencies	
Oil	Price	Currency	Rate
Brent	13.51	SA Riyal	0.2866
WT Texas	15.41	AE Dirham	0.2723
Bonny	13.51	KW Dinar	3.2798
Dubai	11.62	BH Dinar	0.3770
UL Gas	157.00	CY Pound	1.8751

Metal Prices		Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)	
Metal	Price	Currency	Rate
Gold (oz's)	298.75	USD	5.54
Silver (oz's)	8.48	GBP	7.41
Platinum (oz's)	383.5	JPY	1.25
AL (3 Months) #N/A DR#N/A DRP		DEM	3.40
CU (3 Months) #N/A DR#N/A DRP		FRF	4.03
Zinc (3 Months) #N/A DR#N/A DRP		CHF	0.62
Lead (3 Months) #N/A DR#N/A DRP		ITL	6.00
NI (3 Months) #N/A DR#N/A DRP			

Energy		JOD Cross Rates	
Commodity	Price	Currency	Rate
Coffee (c/b's)	172.25	US Dollar	0.708
Cocoa (c/b's)	1851	GB Sterling	1.1634
Sugar (c/b's)	267	DE Mark	0.3894
Wheat (c/b's)	0	CH Franc	0.4824
Soya (c/b's)	26.86	FR Franc	0.1162
Yee (c/b's)	180	JP Yen	0.8809
Barley (c/b's)	0	NL Guilder	0.3465
Rice (c/b's)	400	IT Lira	0.3855

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
TELEPHONE: 50711 / 507129											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 28/02/1998											
											
LAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE		
346,000	250,000	ARAB BANK	15.6	1.18	3	100	33680	336.00	339.00	3.00	+
2,340	1,480	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	5	0.00	15	24342	43772	1.80	1.79	-0.01	-
1,300	880	MED. BANK INV. CO.	63.1	0.00	6	17150	16663	1.01	1.96	0.95	+
2,680	1,450	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.1	6.21	3	3650	6132	1.68	1.68	0.00	0
5,300	4,610	THE HOUSING BK.	29.8	1.95	3	2880	49248	5.10	4.98	-0.12	-
920	620	JOR. CREDIT BANK	4.3	9.99	8	2500	1868	72	73	0.01	+
4,020	1,990	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	10.7	8.57	15	6828	14501	2.11	2.10	-0.01	-
2,350	1,610	JOR. INV. FID. BANK/NEW	5	0.00	1	100	161	1.61	1.61	0.00	0
1,550	800	JUT. AL-WAL. (BETHA)	5	17.56	3	1500	1260	81	84	0.03	+
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 235.92 LCHG: +0.31											
2,270	1,690	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	6.7	6.23	31	12800	30224	2.26	2.27	-0.01	-
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 123.69 LCHG: +0.83											
2,080	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.9	4.95	20	16600	34274	2.01	2.06	0.05	+
4,190	2,450	HUNAN MINERALS	22.2	3.55	3	2749	12096	4.19	4.40	0.21	+
1,890	930	HAEL. PORTPOLITO	9	0.00	10	3800	3957	1.03	1.05	0.02	+
610	450	JORDAN INVT. TRAD.	21.6	0.00	1	500	210	1.44	1.42	-0.02	-
4,050	2,890	ARAB DEV. INV. HONG.	10.5	0.00	1	500	2010	4.02	4.02	0.00	0
1,880	1,430	UNIFIED CO.	8.4	6.25	32	16392	26698	1.72	1.76	0.04	+
810	600	UNION LAND DEV.	5	6.00	2	1750	1180	67	68	0.01	+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 117.75 LCHG: +0.61											
4,450	2,690	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	18.5	4.00	28	68810	184080	2.70	2.75	0.05	+
4,140	2,050	JOR. PROGRESSIVE	9.4	2.94	5	10564	37618	3.35	3.60	0.25	+
7,050	5,620	ARAB POTASH CO.	15.1	3.09	5	3833	23758	6.20	6.20	0.00	0
11,160	9,300	JOR. PETROL. SERVICES	10.0	8.63	6	172	1770	10.27	10.30	0.03	+
2,680	1,380	INDUSTRIAL COM. JOR.	9	0.00	2	118	15	1.32	1.30	-0.02	-
7,350	5,800	JOR. WOODRO WILLO	10.4	3.10	1	400	2580	6.45	6.45	0.00	0
4,840	2,440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	13.6	4.04	112	46975	229758	4.78	4.95	0.17	+
7,200	2,260	JOR. CHROMIC IND.	4.6	4.48	4	788	1749	2.26	2.24	-0.02	-
2,610	1,020	JOR. STEEL INDUST.	15.6	6.35	1	200	292	1.30	1.28	-0.02	-
6,000	4,400	DAR ALDAMA INV. INV.	14.8	4.13	16	6590	39548	5.97	6.05	0.08	+
3,460	2,320	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.8	10.08	7	7200	17861	2.47	2.48	0.01	+
610	480	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.4	0.00	48	16650	36777	1.47	1.47	0.00	0
1,180	880	ARAB BANK CORP. HOD.	24.4	0.00	2	1950	1560	82	80	-0.02	-
650	310	NATIONAL TRD.	9	0.00	2	700	399	55	57	0.02	+
1,090	370	ZEPHERUS PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	18	18990	7189	141	141	0.00	0
2,330	1,380	UNIV. CHEM. IND.	6.39	0.00	1	900	12870	1.48	1.42	-0.06	-
3,000	920	NATL. CABLE WIRE. JAFAC	27.4	0.00	31	20350	22870	1.11	1.14	0.03	+
790	530	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	9	0.00	13	14650	8838	1.60	1.61	0.01	+
1,560	1,130	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	17.9	0.00	104	8460	119976	1.33	1.40	0.07	+
1,720	810	UNIV. HOD. IND.	9	0.00	112	141400	122889	90	94	0.04	+
1,410	890	JOR. TRD. RESOURCES	10.5	12.82	12	14250	10989	77	78	0.01	+
1,620	1,250	NATL. CALORIM.	14.0	4.73	3	3250	1835	1.48	1.48	0.00	0
1,980	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	18.0	0.00	27	70291	68893	97	98	0.01	+
1,880	1,290	EL-JAY READY WEAR	47.9	0.00	2	204	277	1.36	1.36	0.00	0
1,280	1,080	SPIL. TOROSCO	6.6	0.00	21	95484	114592	1.19	1.20	0.01	+
1,200	860	UNION CH. & YEG.	50.5	0.00	22	9200	9994	1.			
810	660	JORDAN STEEL	31.9	6.67	27	35500	26511	73	75	0.02	+
840	570	MED. EAST COMPLEX	6.1	14.93	74	232240	154483	66	67	0.01	+
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 113.39 LCHG: +0.80											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 169.54 LCHG: +0.50											
875 1090477 1547332											



## Pacers win 124-59; Sonics beat Hawks

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — For the first time in the National Basketball Association's 51-year history, one team scored more than twice as many points as the other.

The Indiana Pacers pulled off the feat Friday night with the second-most lopsided victory in NBA history, a 124-59 drubbing of the Portland Trail Blazers.

The Blazers barely surpassed the NBA record low of 57 points and came within three points of matching the worst rout in league history — a 68-point loss by Miami to Cleveland in 1991.

Previously, the closest a team had come to doubling its opponent's point total was in 1951 — before the introduction of the 24-second clock — when the Minneapolis Lakers defeated the Milwaukee Hawks 99-51, according to the Elias Sports Bureau.

It was the largest margin of victory and the fewest points by an opponent in Indiana's 22-year NBA history.

• **Boston Celtics 120, Golden State Warriors 88:** At Boston, Antoine Walker had 21 points, 10 rebounds and 7 assists despite sitting most of the second half, leading the Celtics to their largest margin of victory this season.

Boston has won three of four games since acquiring Kenny Anderson. He had 10 assists and has 19 assists in the past two games without a turnover.

The Warriors were led by Jason Caffey, who had 21 points and 10 rebounds.

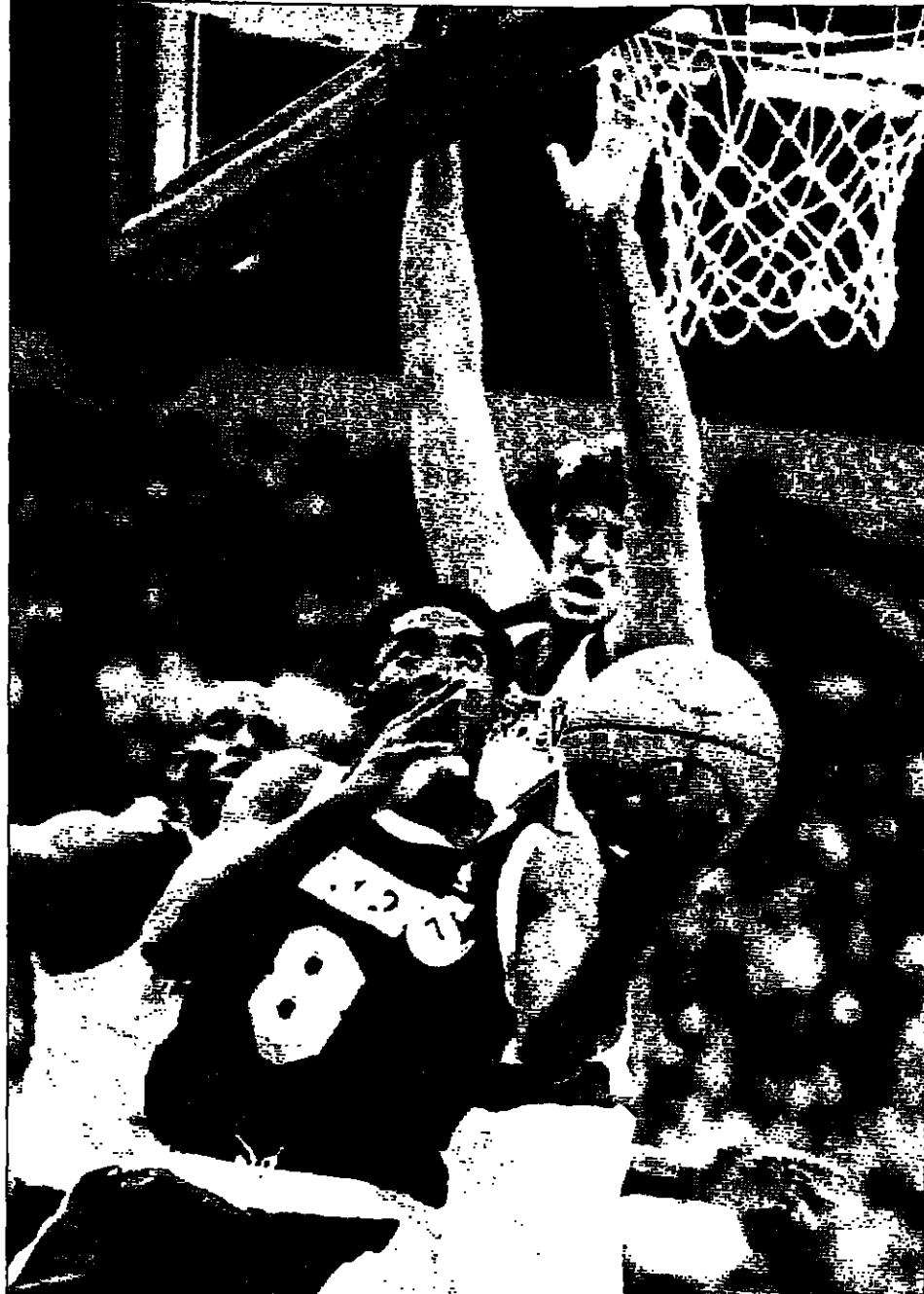
Boston took control of the game from the outset and led by 20 points midway through the second quarter.

• **Los Angeles Lakers 104, Minnesota Timberwolves 91:** At Minneapolis, Shaquille O'Neal scored 35 points and Los Angeles held Minnesota scoreless over the final 2:28.

Eddie Jones scored 13 of his 17 points in the second half for the Lakers, who improved to 3-1 in the midst of their six-game, nine-day road trip — their longest of the season.

O'Neal scored six straight points early in the second half to give the Lakers a 58-52 lead. He made 14 of 27 shots from the field and also had seven rebounds.

• **Detroit Pistons 90, Cleveland Cavaliers 87:** In the Detroit suburb of Auburn Hills, Jerome Williams blocked a shot by Shawn Kemp that would have tied it, and Grant Hill



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (8) leaps around the defence of Minnesota Timberwolves forwards Cherokee Parks and Kevin Garnett (L) for an underhanded layup during the 1st half (Reuters photo)

split a pair of free throws with 10 seconds left for Detroit.

Carl Thomas, forced into critical minutes due to the injury to rookie Derek Anderson, shot an airball on a 3-point attempt as time expired to give the Cavs their ninth loss in 12 games.

Williams had 17 points and 12 rebounds for the Pistons, who overcame an 11-point halftime deficit to win for only the third time in eight tries. Brian Williams 17 for Detroit, while Hill had 12 points, seven assists and six rebounds.

Kemp led all scorers with 26 points, but was stymied when he tried to tie it at 89 with a minute left.

• **Toronto Raptors 115, Orlando Magic 107, 3 Overtime:** At Orlando, Doug Christie scored 35 points and Chauncey Billups made key plays in

the extra periods against Orlando, which played without NBA player of the week Nick Anderson.

Anderson, who had a bad case of the flu, is expected to miss the Magic's game in Charlotte on Saturday night. Billups converted a three-point play with 10.4 seconds left in the second overtime to force the third extra period, then hit a 3-pointer with 87 seconds left for a 113-107 lead in the third overtime.

John Wallace had 24 points for Toronto, which won only its fifth road game of the season. Marcus Camby added 14 points and 13 rebounds.

Horace Grant had 20 points and 20 rebounds for the Magic, who led by nine and 14 points during regulation, and by four with 26 seconds left in second overtime.

• **Philadelphia 76ers 79, Denver Nuggets 78:** At Denver, Derrick Coleman had 19 points and 10 rebounds and Philadelphia denied Denver a go-ahead basket in the final 13.9 seconds.

Allen Iverson added 18 points and six assists and Theo Ratliff had 10 points and 12 rebounds for the 76ers, who completed their first sweep of the Nuggets since the 1993-94 season. Philadelphia won for only the eighth time in 28 road games.

Laphonso Ellis reached double figure for the 31st time in his last 32 games with 22 points. Ellis moved past Bobby Jones for 15th place on Denver's career scoring list with 4,822 points as the Nuggets lost for the 10th straight time.

• **Seattle SuperSonics 90, Atlanta Hawks 88:** At Seattle, Vin Baker's 3-meter shot over Alan Henderson with 3.1 seconds won the

## Edwards looks good for gold

VALENCIA (AFP) — Britain's Jonathan Edwards underlined his gold medal pretensions in the men's triple-jump at the European Indoor Athletics Championships here Friday by soaring to 17m15 to top his Group in the qualifying.

But 31-year-old compatriot Solomon Wariso, who had been hoping to succeed in the 400m, went out in the heats after clocking a disappointing 48.41secs and finishing third.

It was another bitter European championship experience for Wariso who was sent home from the outdoors in 1994 and banned for three months after inadvertently taking a tonic called "Up Your Gas" that contained an illegal substance.

In Friday's heats he trailed behind Carlos Silva of Portugal (47.75) and Tomasz Kzurbak of Poland (47.85).

## Stich turns down Austrian offer

VIENNA (AFP) — Former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich of Germany has turned down the chance to take over as sporting director of the Austrian Davis Cup team.

Stich said he was not happy with the way the Austrian Tennis Federation was run and doubted if he could change it.

Stich, who retired last year after recurring injury problems, had been keen on taking over as German Davis Cup captain but the job went instead to his longtime rival Boris Becker.

Baker and Detlef Schrempf, returning after a four-game absence because of a bruised throat, each had 17 points and Gary Payton a season-high 15 assists for the Sonics.

For the Hawks, Smith scored 21 points and Laettner 20, while Dikembe Mutombo had 14 rebounds. • **Phoenix Suns 104, Los Angeles Clippers 99:** At Los Angeles, Antonio McDyess scored 22 points and Jason Kidd got four of his 15 points in the final 67 seconds as Phoenix held off the Clippers.

Isaac Austin had 24 points and Eric Piatkowski added 22 for the Clippers, who lost for the 16th time in 18 games and have dropped all three meetings with the Suns this season.

Steve Nash and Rex Chapman hit consecutive 3-pointers to put the Suns ahead to stay, 91-89, with 7:15 left in the fourth quarter. Austin — the only Clipper to score any points during a nine-minute span of the period — hit a short jumper before Phoenix responded with a 7-2 spurt and opened up a 100-94 lead with 1:07 left.

A critical non-call came during the run, when Chapman retrieved the ball behind the midcourt line, but no backcourt violation was called and Kidd hit a short jumper for a 100-94 lead.

## Cannes run out of steam while PSG scrape through

PARIS (AFP) — First division strugglers Cannes crashed out of the French Cup Friday when they ran out of steam and were beaten 2-0 at home in extra-time by second division Mulhouse.

A goal from Soliveres (106) and a penalty from Pierre-Yves David (115) ended Cannes hopes.

They finished with nine men. Mazzoncini was ordered off in the 67th minute for a late tackle on the ever-dangerous Soliveres, and Assignon followed him off in extra-time.

Mulhouse also had a player sent off — Nallet receiving his marching orders in the closing minutes.

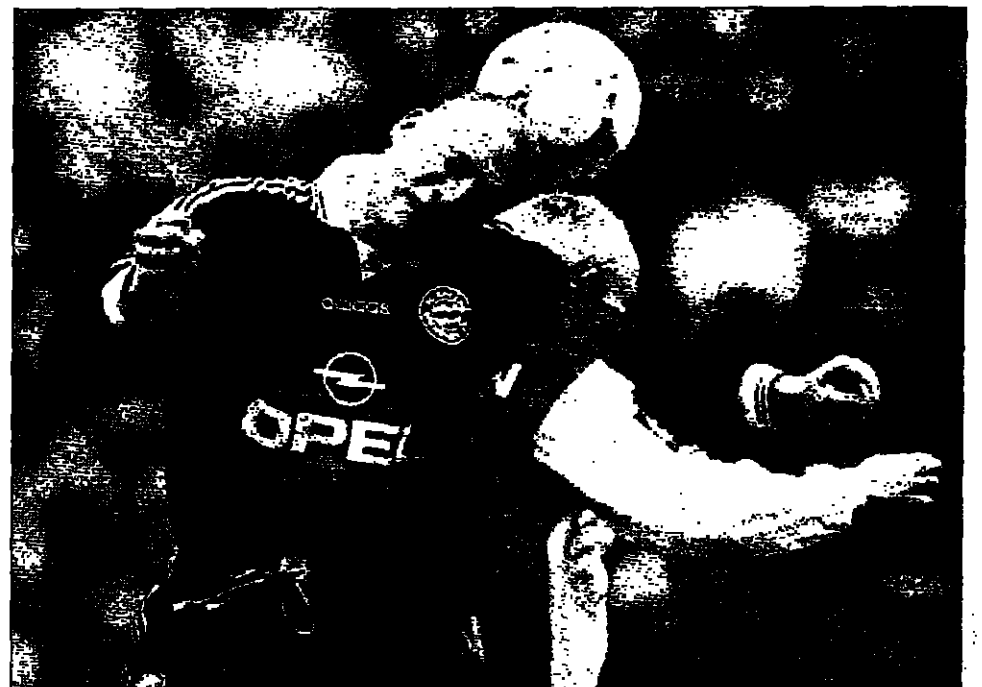
In Friday's other matches, first division Paris St Germain edged nervously into the

quarter-finals — snatching an unconvincing 1-0 away victory in extra-time over the part-timers of amateur side Pau. Rai scored the PSG goal in the 113th minute while the home side finished with eight players after having three sent off.

Caen won a penalty shootout to eliminate fellow second division Sochaux after the teams had finished 2-2 after extra time.

Sochaux looked to have the match sewn up when they took a 2-0 lead inside half-an-hour, thanks to goals from Dallet and Baudry. But Caen fought back in the second-half.

Gallon pulled one back two minutes after the break and Brouard then slotted home a crucial penalty on the hour.



Carsten Jancker of FC Bayern Munich (L) and Karsten Baumann of FC Cologne (R) fight for the ball during the first minutes of their first division soccer match in Munich's Olympic Stadium (Reuters photo)

## Kaiserlautern held by Karlsruhe

BONN (AFP) — Relegation-threatened Karlsruhe held leaders Kaiserslautern to a shock 0-0 draw in Friday's league match to leave the league pacemakers six points clear of Bayern Munich who have a game in hand and who play FC Cologne on Saturday.

Led by an inspired 37-year-old Guido Buchwald, returning after being on the sidelines with a calf injury since his arrival back in Germany from his

tour of duty in Japan's J League, Karlsruhe produced a superbly concentrated performance. In Friday's other match Borussia Dortmund, who will play Bayern next week in the Champions League quarter-finals, also shared the points with a 2-2 draw against Werder Bremen.

All four goals came in the last quarter-of-an-hour. Andreas Herzog, back from a debilitating toe injury and warming up for

Austria's campaign in this year's World Cup, opened the scoring in the 75th minute. Joerg Heinrich equalised 90 seconds later and Dortmund then went ahead three minutes later through Stephane Chapuisat.

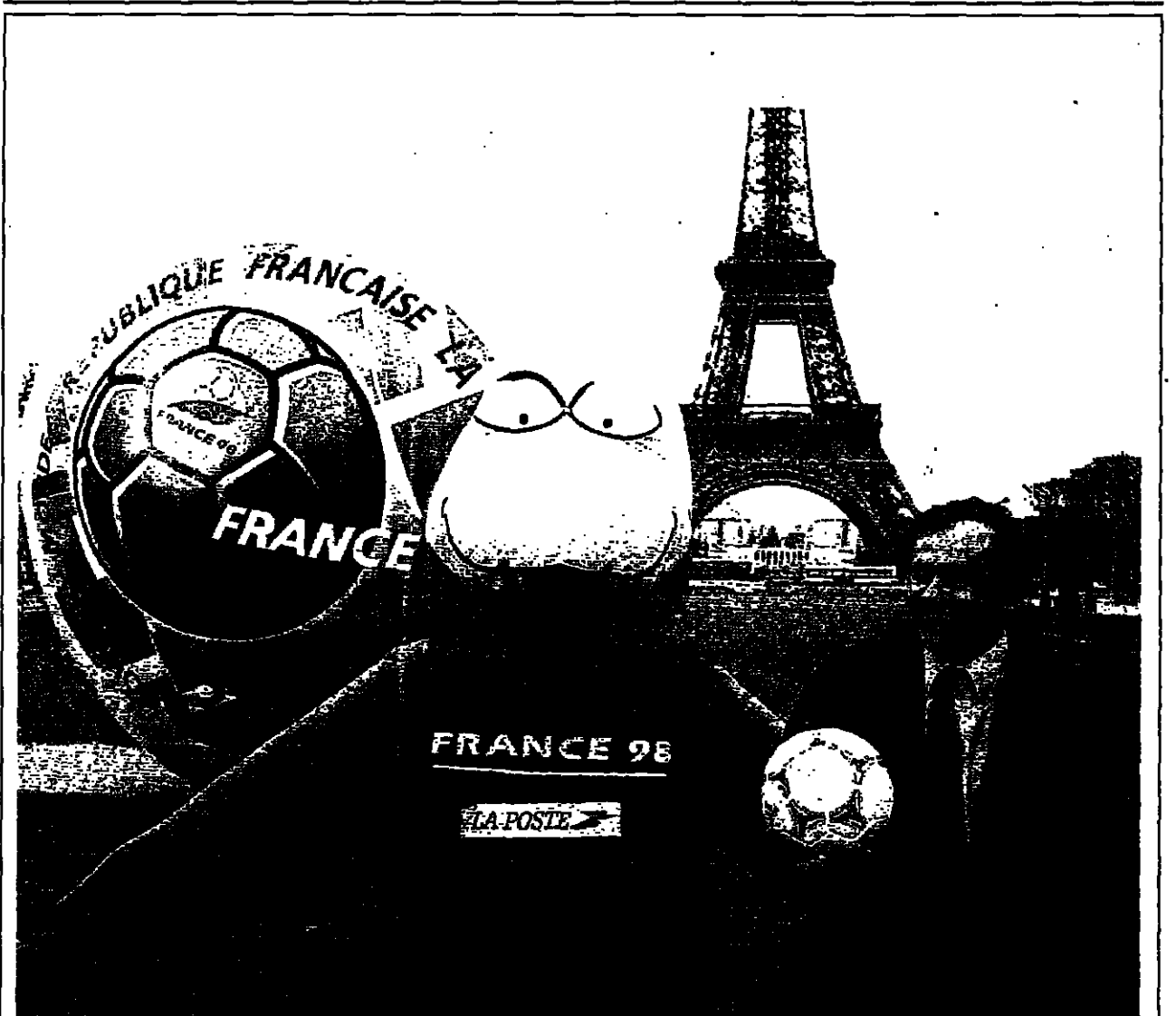
Bremen's other Austrian, Heimo Pfeiffenberger, made it 2-2 with two minutes left to play.

### GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIAH HIRSH

#### WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

- Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠ J 7 3   ♣ A K 8 7 6 2   ♠ K 9   ♠ K 6
- The bidding has proceeded:
- NORTH   EAST   SOUTH   WEST
- 1NT   Pass   2♠   Pass
- 4♣   Pass   7   Pass
- What action do you take?
- Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
- ♠ A Q 5 2   ♣ A Q J 5   ♠ Q 8 2   ♠ 4 7 6
- The bidding has proceeded:
- NORTH   EAST   SOUTH   WEST
- 2NT   Pass   3♠   Pass
- 3♠   Pass   7   Pass
- What do you bid now?
- Q. 3 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A 5   ♣ 9 8 7   ♠ A K Q J 10 6 5 2
- The bidding has proceeded:
- NORTH   EAST   SOUTH   WEST
- 2♠   Pass   3♠   Pass
- 3♠   Pass   7   Pass
- What is your opening bid?
- Q. 4 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ K Q J 8 6 5   ♠ 3   ♠ A   ♠ 4 6 4
- What do you bid now?
- Q. 5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A J 3   ♠ A K Q 8 5   ♠ A K Q 7
- What is your opening bid?
- Q. 6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
- ♠ A K 7 3   ♠ A J 5 4 2   ♠ A K   ♠ 8 6
- What is your opening bid?



Former French soccer star Michel Platini, co-president of the France '98 Soccer World Cup organization committee, poses with World Cup mascot Footix and an inflatable reproduction of the new circular World Cup trophy, near the Eiffel Tower in Paris Saturday Feb. 28, 1998. The World Cup will start on June 10 (AP Photo)

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	Demi Moore ... in <b>G.I. JANE</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	Pierce Brosnan as James Bond... in <b>007...TOMORROW NEVER DIES</b> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30  GEORGE OF THE JUNGLE Shows: 5 p.m. only	Adel Imam & Yusra ... in <b>RISALA ILA AL WALI</b> (ARABIC) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30  LONG KISS GOODNIGHT Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN Meg Ryan ... in <b>ADDICTED TO LOVE</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	ABDOUN <b>HIGH SCHOOL HIGH</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:30  Clint Eastwood ... in <b>ABSOLUTE POWER</b> Shows: 8:30, 10:45	<b>THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE</b> Starring Hisham Yanes and his group For reservations call: 640155, 625155

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## Komen goes close to world record

SYDNEY (AFP) — Kenyan wonder Daniel Komen missed his own two-mile world record by just three-tenths of a second in another superb run at the Sydney Grand Prix athletics meet here Saturday.

The 21-year-old Komen, who has already smashed the world indoor records for the 3,000m and 5,000m this year, registered a time of 7mins 58.91secs.

On a wonderful night's athletics, world champion Maurice Greene went under 10 seconds in winning the 100m and took a pop at absent world record holder Donovan Bailey.

The 23-year-old American clocked 9.99secs into a slight headwind to break his own Australian all-comers mark of 10.06 set in Melbourne on Wednesday.

American world 100m champion Marion Jones stepped up to 200m and smashed the Australian all-comers mark with 21.98.

Komen's Kenyan teammates Julius Kiptoo and Martin Keino paced the multi-world record-holder for the first half of the two mile race before dropping out and leaving him to finish alone.

The sensational Komen, who missed selection in the

Kenyan team for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, was urged home by the large crowd before falling just short of his own world mark, although it was only the second time the eight-minute mark had been broken.

"I've now run two races under eight minutes so I think it's a great race for me," said Komen, who added that he thought Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie was the only person capable of staying with him.

"When I started the eighth lap I thought I was on world record pace, but I made a miscalculation."

"I think I've improved and next time the world mark should be under there."

Brash Greene, who talks just as fast as he runs, had a few words for Bailey, who missed the Sydney meet after bruising a heel in training during the week. Bailey, the world record holder at 9.84, finished distinct third to Greene in Melbourne last Wednesday.

"You don't know what a person is feeling like, you don't know if they're really hurt or if that's just what they're saying," said Greene. "He (Bailey) just didn't feel up to running tonight."

"If I didn't think I was going to win I wouldn't have



American Maurice Greene runs during the 100 metres final at an international meet held at the Sydney Olympic site February 28. Greene ran the blue-ribbon event in a time of 9.99 seconds, defeating compatriots Jon Drummond, who ran a time of 10.10 seconds, and Dennis Mitchell who finished in third place with a time of 10.25 seconds (Reuters photo)

run either.

"I believe I should run under 10 seconds every time," said Greene, who turns 27 on Sunday.

"I didn't execute as well in Melbourne and that cost me so I came here to do a job tonight."

"People say it's too early in the season to be running fast, but the fans don't know how early it is, they bought a ticket and they want to see a good race."

When asked how far away he was from Bailey's world record, Greene replied: "I'm very close, you know it can go at any time."

Americans also took out the minor placings, with Greene's training partner Jon Drummond second in 10.10 and three-time Olympic finalist Dennis Mitchell third in 10.25.

Elsewhere, Australia's

world champion Cathy Freeman won the 400m in 51.37.

Despite clocking a relatively slow time, Freeman said she was coping well with the pressure of being Australia's only reigning world champion after taking the 400m title in Athens last year.

"I'm happy with both the last two meets because I'm dealing with the hype pretty well," she said.

"It's my first year as world champion and everything has changed."

"My state of mind is that of someone who has so much more to achieve."

Australian Emma George won the women's pole vault with a best clearance of 4.40m, but missed with three attempts at 4.58m, which would have bettered by 1cm her own world best set in Auckland last week.

## Neville goal stretches United lead to twelve points

LONDON (AFP) —

England defender Philip Neville playing in central midfield took Manchester United twelve points clear of the chasing pack in the English Premiership on Saturday morning as the champions beat Chelsea 1-0 in a fiery match.

It was Neville's first senior goal, and will fuel United with confidence ahead of their Champions' League clash with Real Betis on Wednesday night. Chelsea, meanwhile slip further into the Premiership chasing pack.

It was superb interplay involving Denis Irwin, Teddy Sheringham and Andy Cole sent the 21-year-old Neville through on Dmitri Kharine just after the half-hour of a frantic and bad-tempered clash.

The only downside for Ferguson was the sad sight of Gary Pallister forced off after aggravating his long-term back problem, making the centre-half a real doubt for the trip to Monaco.

The Manchester United manager appeared pleased with the result.

"The referee has a hard job to do in this type of game. I don't think the referee handled it particularly well. We're in good shape at the top of the league but we know we are going into a hard game on Wednesday," said Ferguson.

With five changes overall, this United side included the return of Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes — the latter having had no chance on Wednesday evening — into the midfield, although the surprise was that Butt was on the left, counteracting the threat of Dan Petrescu.

The biggest danger, however, was one of tempers exploding. Luca Vialli had warned his side to be mature and at least Frank



Manchester United's David Beckham goes to tackle Chelsea's Graeme Le Saux during their FA Premiership clash at Stamford Bridge February 28. Manchester won the match 1-0 (Reuters photo)

Leboeuf seemed to be obeying that instruction.

But to describe Dennis Wise as a hothead would often be an understatement, and the home skipper was the common denominator in most of the unsavoury head-to-heads that were to break into more nasty conflagrations as the game went on.

More worryingly for Ferguson was Pallister's back problem, apparent early on as he was caught in possession by Roberto Di Matteo, although Scholes got him out of trouble then.

Then Gianfranco Zola, starting on the left with licence to roam, ghosted past the England man before firing into the crowd and as Pallister signalled to the bench, Henning Berg was sent into action.

But in the 31st minute, after the otherwise subdued

Mark Hughes had headed over at the other end, United went in front, although few other than the real optimists would have put their money on the scorer.

It was a typical United goal however, swift inter-passing finding the way through, and Neville's assured low finish made a mockery of the fact that he had never found the net before.

The goal saw the undercurrents boiling over, Wise and Butt continually involved, and both of them — along with David Beckham — brought to heel by the cards of Steve Dunn.

A Vialli shot was deflected onto the bar before Petrescu's run and shot brought the first save of the game from Peter Schmeichel, although

United still had something extra. Cole's explosive pace almost creating something out of nothing on half-time.

Off-target efforts from Hughes and Wise were symptomatic of Chelsea's malaise, a lack of self-belief evident, and United were cruising.

Chelsea pushed forward in the later stages, Tore Andre Flo having replaced player-boss Vialli, but never with any realistic hope of finding a way through, Berg and Ronny Johnsen Norwegian rocks at the heart of the defence.

Ferguson's only gripe was with the officials, the United boss racing from his dug-out to confront the linesman when he ruled one ball still in play.

It summed up United's superiority. Chelsea knew they had been well-beaten.

## SCOREBOARD

NBA	
Boston	97-85 Orlando
Indiana	95-82 Chicago
Toronto	92-87 Detroit
LA Lakers	92-87 Minnesota
Philadelphia	87-78 Denver
Seattle	86-83 Portland
Phoenix	84-82 Sacramento

LPGA WTA Tour	
Semi-finals	
Jana Novotna (Cze) 7-5	Sherry Haysbert (USA)
6-4, 6-1	

Battersen ATP Tour	
Quarter-finals	
Jan Siemerink (Ned) 6-4	Mark Philippoussis (Ger)
6-3, 6-4	
Yevgeny Kafelnikov (Rus) 6-4	Tim Henman (Gbr)
4-6, 6-3, 6-2	
Cedric Pioline (Fra) 6-4	Karel Koucky (Cze)
6-3, 4-6, 6-3	
Wayne Ferreira (RSA) 6-4	Andre Agassi (USA)
6-4, 6-4	

Oklahoma State WTA tournament	
Quarter-finals	
Lindsay Davenport (USA) 6-3	Sherry Haysbert (USA)
6-1, 6-4	
Shahar Pe'er (ISR) 6-4	Christine Lhond (Fra)
6-3, 6-4	
Venus Williams (USA) 6-3	Francesca Schiavone (ITA)
6-6 (15), 6-4	
Joannette Kucera (RSA) 6-4	Francesca Schiavone (ITA)
6-1, 6-3	

Philadelphia ATP tournament	
Thomas Enqvist (Swe) 6-4	Tommy Haas (Ger)
4-6 (7/11), 6-4	
Tommy Haas (Ger) 6-4	Tommy Haas (Ger)
6-4, 6-4	
Henning Berg (Nor) 6-4	Henning Berg (Nor)
6-4, 6-4	



Pete Sampras

## Sampras reaches semifinals

PHILADELPHIA (AFP) — Pete Sampras, whose position as the World No. 1 has come under increasing pressure from Czech Petr Korda over the last two weeks, needed just 63 minutes to reach the semi-finals of the ATP Tour event here Friday.

Sampras defeated eighth-seeded Sjeng Schalken of the Netherlands 6-2, 6-2, and will meet sixth-seeded Tommy Haas of Germany for a place in the final.

Haas advanced to his third career ATP Tour semi-final by rallying past American Jeff Tarango 4-6, 6-4, 6-4.

Last year, the 19-year-old Haas reached the semi-finals at Hamburg, Germany, and was a finalist at Lyon, France.

Sampras, still seeking his first title of the year, leads Australian Open champion

Korda by just 263 points and Australia's United States Open champion Patrick Rafter by 368 points in this week's world rankings.

But Korda's second-round loss to Frenchman Cedric Pioline in London on Thursday has allowed Sampras to extend his 98-week run at the top.

Korda needed to reach the semi-finals to have a chance of overtaking the American.

Korda could also have vaulted over Sampras for the No. 1 ranking had he won last week's event in Antwerp, Belgium. But he lost to Slovakian Karol Kucera in the quarter-finals.

Asked about his Haas, Sampras said: "I played him when he was starting to make his name on the tour. He has a good all-around

game and does everything quite well. He has a real good backhand."

"He fights hard and competes well. He is a good, up-and-coming young guy and he will be hungry tomorrow."

Third-seeded Thomas Enqvist of Sweden advanced to his second ATP Tour semi-final of the year when he beat American Richey Reneberg 6-4, 7-6 (7/11).

The 23-year-old Enqvist, the 1995 champion, won his first title of the season three weeks ago in Marseille, France.

He will face Canadian qualifier Sebastien Lareau Saturday. Lareau posted a 6-4, 6-3 victory over South African Grant Stafford.

## Kafelnikov ousts Henman

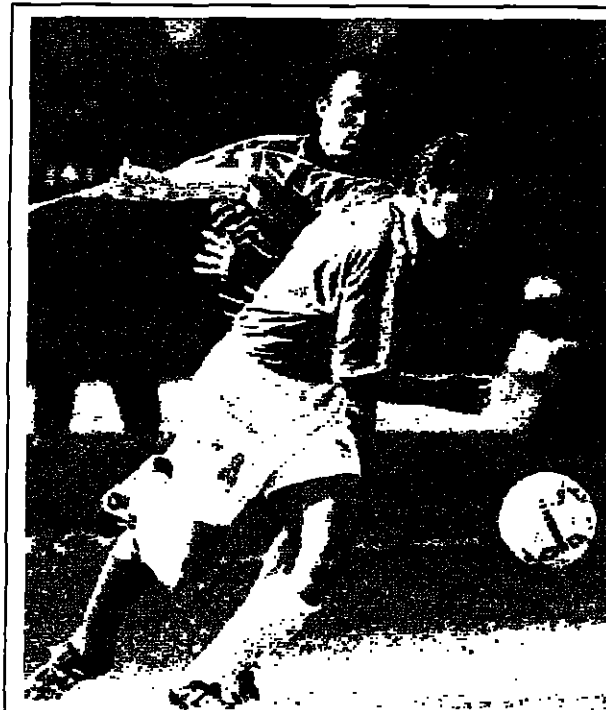
LONDON (AFP) — Third-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia overcame some stiff resistance from Britain's Tim Henman before scoring a 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 victory Friday in the quarter-finals of the Guardian Direct Cup ATP Tour event.

The former French Open champion, won in exactly two hours and was the only seeded player to reach the last four.

Kafelnikov now plays South African Wayne Ferreira for a place in Sunday's final. In the last match of the day Ferreira defeated Australia's second-seed Patrick Rafter 6-4, 6-4.

Earlier Dutch left-hander Jan Siemerink, who was given a wild-card to play the tournament, beat Germany's Marc-Kevin Goellner 6-3, 6-4.

He now plays last year's Wimbledon finalist Cedric Pioline of France who saw off in-form seventh-seeded Karol Kucera of Slovakia 6-3, 4-6, 6-2.



Egyptian striker Imam Hazem dribbles the ball past a South African defender in the final of the African Nations cup February 28. Egypt won 2-0 (Reuters photo)

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After International Court ruling on Lockerbie

# Libyan lawyer still backs trial in neutral country

TUNIS (R) — The lawyer of the two Libyan suspects wanted in the Lockerbie bombing said on Saturday he still backed a trial in a neutral country even though a ruling by the International Court of Justice was a step toward confirming Libya's jurisdiction.

The Hague-based International Court of Justice ruled on Friday that it had jurisdiction to hear Libyan complaints against Britain and the United States over their 10-year pursuit of the alleged bombers of Pan Am Flight 103 in 1988 over Lockerbie, Scotland. The bombing killed 270 people.

The two intelligence agents have been indicted in both Britain and the U.S. Libya has refused to hand them over to either country, saying they would not get a fair trial.

"It is a ruling in the right direction... and I am almost certain that the final ruling will be in line with the 1971 Montreal Convention which means that Libya's judiciary is competent to hear the case and is right to refuse to hand over

the suspects," Ibrahim Legwell, lawyer of the two suspects, told Reuters by telephone from Tripoli.

"We had rejected to hand over the two suspects to the United States or Britain because it was unlawful and also we were certain that they wouldn't get a fair trial there. We know that a trial in Libya would also be suspect. The reasonable solution is a trial in a neutral country," he said.

"It is our interest and that of the families of the bombing victims that there be a trial. That's why we support a neutral venue."

The United Nations Security Council has imposed air, arms and diplomatic embargoes against Libya as well as a ban on importing some equipment for its oil industry until it hands over the suspects for trial in Scotland or the U.S.

Friday's ruling rejected British and U.S. arguments that hearing the Libyan side of the case would encroach on the U.N. resolutions imposing the sanctions.

It opens the way for the

## Egypt, Arab League hail ICJ ruling

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt and the Arab League hailed Saturday the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for ruling the court has jurisdiction to decide where two Libyan suspects in the 1988 Lockerbie bombing stand trial. Sayed Kassim Al Masri, Egypt's deputy foreign minister, told reporters he hoped the court's announcement Friday would "permit speeding up the resolution of the crisis." He also said that the ICJ's decision "shows that this affair, which has gone on a long time, could move in a positive direction." Earlier, the deputy secretary general of the Arab League, Mohammad Zakarya Ismail, told reporters that "the ICJ decision gives more credibility to the Libyan position... and puts the United States and Britain in an embarrassing situation."

International Court of Justice to hear the substantive issues in the case.

London and Washington played the ruling down as a technicality.

Libya called the ruling a victory and urged other countries to ignore the sanctions.

Libya's Popular Committee for External Relations and International Cooperation, which acts as its foreign ministry, said in a statement: "Libya is expecting the countries of the world... to not feel obliged to comply with the embargo and the sanctions that

the court proved to be illegitimate."

Mr. Legwell said: "As head of the defence team, I will ask the Libyan foreign affairs ministry to appeal to the Security Council to add just one sentence to its Resolution 883 and state that a neutral venue for a trial meets the council's demand."

At the U.N. headquarters in New York, Libya's Ambassador Abuzed Omar Dorda said Libya would be making presentations to the Security Council next week, based on the ruling.

## Iran warns Bonn on German sentenced to death for sex

TEHRAN (AP) — Iran advised Germany Saturday not to interfere in the case of a German businessman sentenced to death for sex with an Iranian woman, warning that pressure could hinder relations.

"The sentencing of a German national by an Iranian court is an issue within the jurisdiction of the Iranian judiciary," state-run Tehran Radio said in a commentary.

"Politicising it and saying that it will harm Iranian-German bilateral relations will have no effect on Iran's judicial processes," the radio said.

An Iranian court sentenced Helmut Hofer, 54, to death in January after convicting him of violating

Iranian law by having sex with a single Muslim woman. He has appealed the verdict, saying he had converted to Islam.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel said Tuesday that Hofer's execution would damage relations with Iran.

Tehran Radio criticised Mr. Kinkel Saturday: "While the German foreign minister has called for the improvement and enhance-

ment of bilateral ties in a telephone conversation with our foreign minister, he has made statements in interviews with German magazines and newspapers which are for domestic consumption and are obstacles in the way of the expansion of ties."

Mr. Kinkel and his Iranian counterpart, Kamal Kharrazi, spoke on the telephone Friday, just days after the European Union foreign ministers recommended closer ties with Tehran, citing confidence in Iran's newly elected President Mohammad Khatami.

The EU and Iran have agreed that a German Foreign Ministry delegate should visit Tehran soon for talks about the Hofer case and about a general improvement of relations.

Earlier this month, Iran's top judge, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, said that Hofer had several legal resources before the death sentence was carried out. Mr. Yazdi said Hofer's appeal was being studied.

## Suspected Iranian spies in Kazakhstan formally charged

MOSCOW (AP) — Three suspected Iranian spies arrested in Kazakhstan have been formally charged with espionage, a top official said Friday.

One of the Iranian was arrested Tuesday at a department store in Almaty, the former capital of this central Asian nation, while allegedly receiving documents from a Kazakh citizen.

Vladimir Bozhko, the head of the nation's counter-intelligence service, said the Kazakh had also been charged, according to the Interfax news agency. Two more Iranians were arrested during the investigation, he said.

The Iranians came to Kazakhstan as businessmen, and do not enjoy diplomatic immunity, Mr. Bozhko said. They face 10-15 years in prison.

The Iranian embassy in Kazakhstan has denied the allegations that the three were intelligence officers, Mr. Bozhko said.

## Arrest warrant issued for ex-Islamist MP

ANKARA (AFP) — A warrant was issued Friday for the arrest of a former parliamentarian deputy of the now-dissolved Islamist Welfare Party, Turkish television reported.

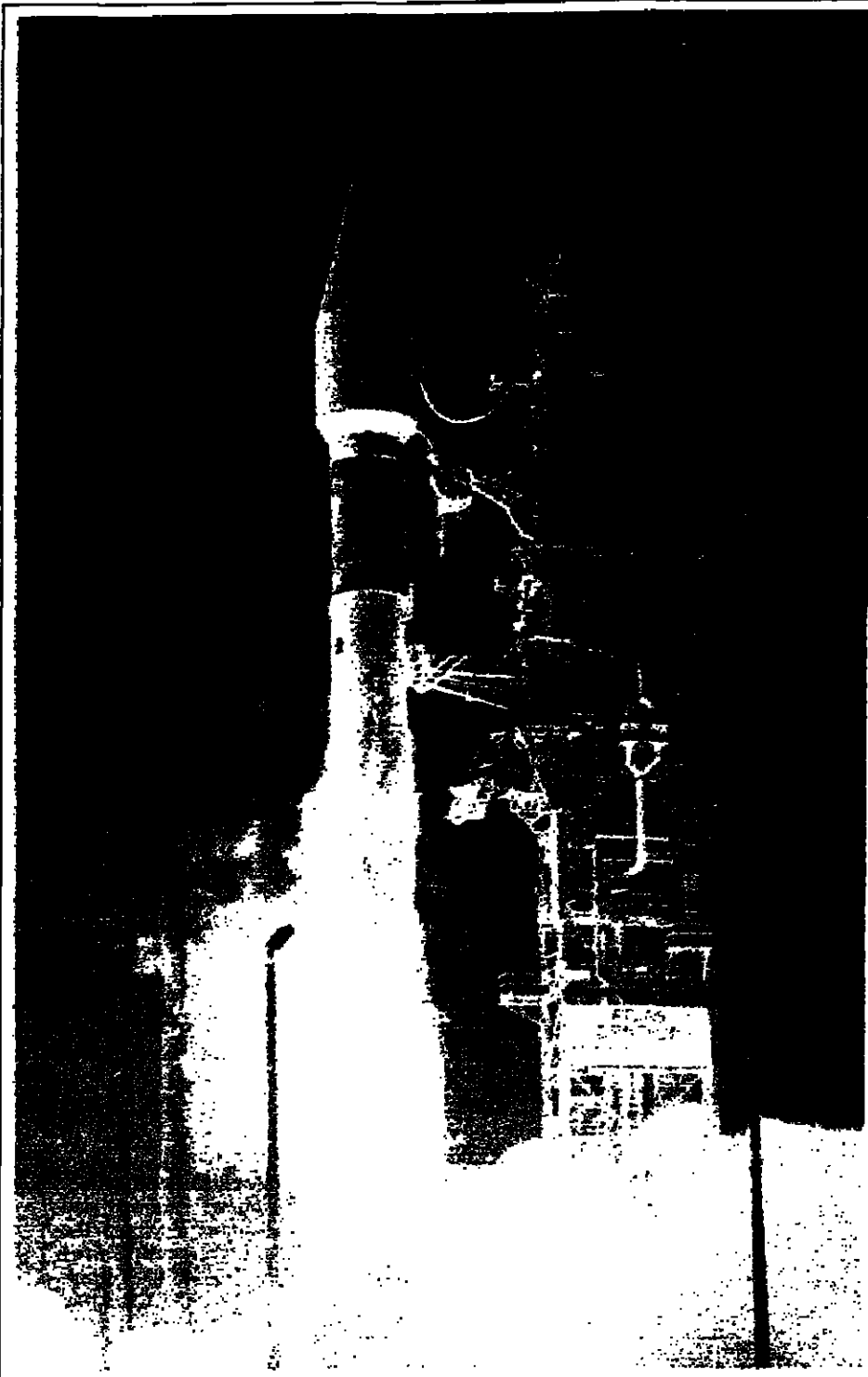
NTV news channel named the ex-deputy as Ibrahim Halil Celik who is believed to be in Saudi Arabia.

Mr. Celik is the second Welfare Party ex-deputy facing arrest since the dissolution of the party ordered by the constitutional court, took effect on Sunday.

On Monday, a warrant was issued for Sevil Yilmaz who is believed to have gone to Germany.

Besides Mr. Celik and Mr. Yilmaz, four other Welfare Party deputies, including the party's leader, former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, have lost their parliamentary seats because of the dissolution. Mr. Erbakan was also banned from politics for five years.

The Welfare or Rifah Party whose dissolution was ordered on Jan. 16 because its policies were deemed to be a threat to Turkey's secular constitution, was the biggest party in parliament with 147 seats out of 550. This week, 133 of the party's deputies rallied to the Fazilet (Virtue) Party founded on Dec. 17 by Ismail Altan, who used to be Mr. Erbakan's lawyer.



ANOTHER SATELLITE UP: An Atlas rocket launches a communication satellite for INTELSAT Friday night. INTELSAT is the owner and operator of the world's most extensive global communications system. This is the 29th INTELSAT satellite to launch on an Atlas launch vehicle (Reuters photo)

## Turk-Cypriot leader spurns British invite

NICOSIA (AFP) — Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash said Saturday that he had declined an invitation to visit Britain from British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook because of a row over visa requirements for Turkish Cypriots.

Mr. Denkash, who heads the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), recognised only by Ankara, said he would not visit Britain until the requirement for Turkish Cypriots to obtain visas is lifted.

London decided in January to require all Turkish Cypriots travelling to Britain to obtain visas.

It said that in the past, Britain had accepted travel documents from the TRNC as a "concession" which it was ending after a number of bogus asylum applications.

Under normal immigration rules visas are required for documents not issued by a recognised national authority.

Mr. Denkash said he had been invited by Mr. Cook to visit Britain next month but he told the Turkish Cypriot news agency TAK that he "won't go to London until this discriminatory and punitive demand is lifted."

Mr. Denkash announced on Tuesday that he would refuse to

## EU talks on Cyprus does not mean mutual recognition — Hannay

NICOSIA (AFP) — The British envoy for Cyprus, Sir David Hannay said Friday that the start in March of talks on European Union (EU) membership for Cyprus will not imply mutual recognition by the island's rival Greek and Turkish-speaking communities.

He said any decision on a joint Cypriot delegation would have to be separated from other issues concerning the partition of Cyprus.

Sir David was speaking after a 24-hour visit to Nicosia during which he met Cypriot President Glafcos Clerides but did not meet Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denkash.

Mr. Denkash earlier said he would refuse to receive the British envoy to protest at Britain's recent introduction of entry visas for people from the self-proclaimed Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) set up in 1983 in the part of Cyprus occupied since 1974 by Turkey.

On Tuesday, Cypriot government spokesman Manolis Christodididis said the participation of Turkish Cypriots in the talks with the EU should not imply recognition of the TRNC which only Turkey has recognised.

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## Turk prosecutor indicts intelligence officer

ANKARA (AP) — A prosecutor on Saturday indicted a former senior intelligence officer who helped reveal a scandal of state links to Turkey's underworld.

Prosecutor Nuh Cetinkaya demanded a 15-year prison term for Hanevi Avci, a former deputy police intelligence chief, on charges of revealing national security secrets.

Mr. Avci allegedly obtained and revealed classified telephone numbers of the national intelligence agency, MIT.

The move to prosecute Mr. Avci has been denounced as an attempt to silence the man who with his testimony to the commission investigating the scandal, helped reveal that state officials hired assassins to kill supporters of a Kurdish rebel group and others considered a threat.

## American activist detained

AMMAN (J.T.) — Kathy Kelly, co-founder of Voices in the Wilderness, was detained by U.S. Customs in her home city of Chicago, interrogated for one hour and had her passport impounded on return from Iraq; when the Royal Jordanian flight from Amman on which she and her delegation landed at Chicago's O'Hare Airport.

Voices in the Wilderness, an organisation comprising American and British volunteers, makes regular visits to Iraq to deliver humanitarian aid in spite of threatened financial and legal penalties.

The most recent delegation of 12 volunteers returned to Amman on Feb. 20 after a 10-day visit to Baghdad, Basra, and Salouja.

In a statement to the Jordan Times, an unrepentant Kelly said: "Democracy is based on information. Those who travel to Iraq return able to voice

the weary, frightened and bewildered pleas of innocent people affected by a seven-year siege. It is an important time to assert our belief in the right to travel freely to an area where children are dying at the hands of U.S. policy makers: U.S. government policy and intransigence, coupled with an appalling indifference to civilian suffering, are a menace to peacemaking.

"We are moved by the outpouring of war resistance that communities around the world are sustaining on behalf of Iraqi children and their families. We remain convinced that sanctions are a weapon of mass destruction."

The Voices' delegations have been advised by the U.S. Treasury Department that they risk a \$1 million fine or 12 years in jail for each visit to Iraq. The most recent trip was the group's 11th (see story on page 7).



Seve loses his pants

DUBAI (R) — Seve Ballesteros suffered an embarrassing setback this week in his bid to recapture the kind of form which won the British Open three times and the U.S. Masters twice. While his rivals were able to practice for the Dubai Desert Classic, the Spaniard had to content himself with trying to find his underwear. His luggage was apparently broken into in transit to Dubai and among the items stolen were six pairs of underpants.

## HK policewomen complain knickers are in a twist

HONG KONG (R) — Hong Kong police chiefs have been forced to pull up their socks over complaints from women officers that government-issue tight-fitting knickers and sag. The grumbles have prompted officials to rethink summer-issue tight-fitting, and now the police Support Wing will put four new brands out for testing to make a policewoman's lot a happier one. "We've had complaints they are generally uncomfortable and sag and wrinkle. We're in the process of addressing the issue," Support Wing Superintendent Charles Mitchell told the South China Morning Post.

## Six months in slammer for two work-shy Italians

MANTUA (AFP) — Two Italian civil servants, who made themselves conspicuous by their absence in the office, now have a genuine excuse for taking time off work. They will each be serving six-month prison terms after a judge in Mantua took a dim view of their chronic absenteeism, jailing them and fining them \$110. Pierantonio Bertolotti, 57, and Paolo Sciaetta, 46, were found guilty of defrauding the Italian state after they repeatedly turned up for work, only to clock in and promptly scurry off.

## Don't smoke, try Mexico, Irish site workers urged

DUBLIN (R) — Irish health authorities are preparing a novel drive to help building site workers kick the smoking habit. Despairing of conventional methods like smoking bans, which scarcely deter those who work in the open air, campaign organisers are tempting site workers with a two-week holiday in Mexico if they stop smoking. "The fact that a worker is outside in the open air does not lessen... the detrimental effects which tobacco has upon the individual smoker," Health Minister Brian Cowen said as he launched the drive. Half of all Irish construction workers are regular smokers, compared with a national average of 29 per cent.

## Anti-car theft device puts Belgian thieves under the thumb

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Good news for diplomats fed up with having their top-of-the-range cars car-jacked while in the EU capital Brussels: a PIN-numbered anti-theft device is at hand. Once installed into those luxury BMW, Mercedes, Jaguars or Ferraris plying this intersection of the common market, the Carjack Protector Blocks system locks the vehicle's doors at the touch of a code. Then, even if the driver finds himself among the 235 people over the last five months around Brussels who were told to get out of the car by a weapon-wielding bandit, he can rest assured his pride and joy won't be going too far. Unless the would-be thief keys is able to reenter the code a few minutes later, the car slows then rolls to a stop.

VENICE (R) — Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini flew to Tehran on Saturday, the first senior European Union (EU) politician to visit Iran for nearly a year as the 15-nation bloc renews relations with its leaders.

The English-language Iran News welcomed Mr. Dini's visit in an editorial. "By visiting Iran now, Dini seems to convey a message that his government wants to let bygones be bygones and begin a new chapter in Rome-Tehran relations," it said.

Mr. Dini, who said he had received a personal invitation from his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharrazi, flew from the northern lagoon city of Venice where he had addressed a Franco-Italian conference on European Monetary Union.

"Italy believes in dialogue," he told La Stampa newspaper earlier this week. "We need an open dialogue to remind Iran to honour its own commitment not to use terrorism as a political weapon and to accept the requests of the European Union for it to respect human rights," Mr. Dini told the newspaper.

Mr. Dini's visit comes less than a week after the EU decided to unfreeze a ban on high-level contacts with the Islamist nation.

The ban was imposed after a German court ruled last April that Iranian leaders had ordered the assassination in 1992 of three Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant.

Ambassadors from the 15-nation bloc withdrew from

Tehran after the court ruling and only returned last November.

EU foreign ministers agreed on Feb. 23 to resume bilateral ministerial contacts with Iran in the light of developments since the election of President Mohammad Khatami, a moderate Shiite cleric, who won a landslide victory in May.

Mr. Dini, whose trip coincides with a visit by U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, was due to arrive in Tehran at 8:00 p.m. after flying via Turkey.

His first official engagement is a meeting with Mr. Kharrazi at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday. He will meet other officials and ministers as well as Italians living in the Iranian capital.

Mr. Dini will also hold talks with President Khatami on Monday and will fly to Esfahan, south of Tehran, to meet the city's governor. He returns to Rome later on Monday.

Bilateral relations and the situation in the Middle East and the Gulf were on the agenda, Foreign Ministry sources said.

Rome has said it hopes the scale of Mr. Khatami's election triumph would enable him to improve Tehran's ties with Europe.

Italy is also one of Iran's biggest EU trading partners, importing 17 per cent of its oil needs from the country in 1996. Italian imports from Iran totalled \$1.6 billion that year.

Iran News said relations soured when Rome helped Iraq during its 1980-88 war

with Iran and were also hurt when Italy delayed supplying Tehran with badly-needed equipment it had purchased.

But it hoped the "welcomed and sincere Italian move could serve as a model to other EU countries where their ties to the Islamic Republic are concerned."

It added: "Rome seems determined to expand its relations with Tehran and replace Bonn as Iran's favourite EU partner."

Without waiting for the ban on ministerial contacts to be lifted, Mr. Dini held talks with Mr. Kharrazi on Jan. 31 during the World Economic Forum in Davos, two days after French Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine did the same in Geneva.

The European move to improve ties with Iran could prompt a fresh diplomatic upset with Washington.

The fact Mr. Dini will be the first to step into the breach in Tehran singles out Italy once again for pursuing a foreign policy not entirely to the liking of the United States.

The Italian government walked a tightrope during the buildup in the Iraqi crisis, siding with Russia and France in pushing for a diplomatic solution to the U.N. arms inspection dispute.

U.S. President Bill Clinton has accused Iran of sponsoring terrorism, seeking nuclear weapons and trying to destroy the Middle East peace process, all denied by Iran. Washington has imposed economic sanctions against Tehran.